

# Journal of Contemporary Studies

A bi-annual publication of the Faculty of Contemporary Studies

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## Editor's Note

The *Journal of Contemporary Studies* is a flagship publication of the Faculty of Contemporary Studies (FCS), National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad. The journal offers its readers in academia, government and the policymaking world in-depth and scholarly analyses, diverse policy perspectives on important contemporary issues, and ongoing debates in the areas of national and international security, public policy and the wider field of world politics.

This issue of the journal comprises of seven articles, two book reviews and four documents providing valuable primary information on significant international developments. The first article, *The Mutual Distrust and Prospects for Restoration of Iran Nuclear Deal* by *Syed Qandil Abbas and Syed Fraz Hussain Naqvi* maps the highs and lows of the Iranian nuclear deal. The authors argue that unilateral withdrawal of Trump administration followed by partial Iranian withdrawal endangered the deal. Joe Biden Presidency has raised hopes about restoration of the deal but current geopolitical dynamics at regional and global level as well as dominance of hardliners in Iran present a grim scenario.

The second article, *Russian Diplomatic and Military Statecraft in Syria* by *Saira Nawaz Abbasi and Nazir Hussain* discusses how Russia has deployed military and diplomatic tools in Syrian conflict to expand not only its footprints in the Middle East but to remerge as a global player. In fact, Russia has turned its risks into opportunities while averting any direct clash with US or Israel in Syria.

The third article, *Role of Indian Media in Fomenting War Hysteria between India and Pakistan: A Case Study of Uri Incident* by *Ghulam Mujadid and Anil Sarfraz* explores how Indian media is shaping public opinion and the fall out it may have on peace and security in the region. The authors dissect how Uri incident in 2016 led to Indian media war mongering, rousing the public sentiments and eventually enabling Indian decision makers to make public claims of surgical strikes against Pakistan. The article highlights the importance of a responsible media in nuclearized South Asia.

The fourth article *A Fragile Shield: India's Ballistic Missile Defence* by *Asim Ahmed and Mahroona Hussain Syed* examines India's rationale and current ability to develop the ballistic missile shield and questions the assertion that BMD as a concept is a 'defensive mechanism' given India's

geographic vulnerabilities, and availability of cost effective offensive strategies to counter BMD.

The fifth article, *Women's Representation in 13th National Assembly of Pakistan: Assessing the Effectiveness of Gender Quota* by *Mussarat Jabeen* and *Sher Muhammad* deploys critical mass theory to analyse efficacy of political empowerment women in Pakistan. It focuses on the effectiveness of gender quotas on women specific legislation in legislative bodies and questions whether women prioritize gender issues differently than their male counter parts. It concludes that increase in the number of women in legislative bodies has not influenced the legislation on women issues to an expected level.

The sixth article, *The Effect of Knowledge Management Infrastructure and Capabilities on Organizational Learning in Pakistan* by *Nasir Mehmood*, *Ikram Ahmad* and *Sadia Saeed* examines the correlation between IT based knowledge management infrastructure and capabilities on organizational learning. The study highlights the need of using IT infrastructure in Pakistan's higher education sector to strengthen knowledge based learning.

The last article, *FATA's Merger into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP): Challenges and Way Forward* by *Saeed Khan* attempts to analyse FATA reforms during 2009-2011 and its merger with KP. It argues that merger itself is a bold step but the project is still far from completion. The key to make it a success is effective implementation of the reforms and deal with the challenges in its way.

I am grateful to all the contributors who have sent their articles for this issue, and the anonymous peer-reviewers whose valuable comments helped authors to improve their contributions. We are accepting articles for the upcoming issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Studies* based on original qualitative or quantitative research, an innovative conceptual framework or a substantial literature review that opens new areas of inquiry and investigation. The editorial team at the journal promotes submissions from expert analysts from around the world. The *Journal* seeks to promote a scholarly understanding of contemporary issues pertaining to traditional and non-traditional security, peace studies, public policy and human resource development. It intends to stimulate interdisciplinary research and writing.

Editor  
Dr. Shaheen Akhtar



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## THE MUTUAL DISTRUST AND THE PROSPECTS FOR RESTORATION OF IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

Syed Qandil Abbas\* & Syed Fraz H. Naqvi\*\*

### Abstract

*Despite the historic distrust between Iran and United States, signing of a landmark nuclear deal emerged as a hope for regional and international stability. This deal is supported by global powers and covered by UN Security Council Resolution but the unilateral withdrawal of Trump administration and Iran's partial withdrawal raised serious concerns for all stakeholders. However, Joe Biden's election as the US president brings hope that the deal will be revived. The victory of Iranian hardliners in the Parliamentary Elections of 2020 and the success of a conservative president in 2021, presents a gloomy scenario. The paper addresses the factors responsible for mutual distrust between the two nations and how, Tehran and Washington managed to overcome it for reaching a nuclear deal? The paper looks into the future of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. It highlights the attempts made to halt the Iranian nuclear program and emphasizes the significance of an Iranian Nuclear Deal. The options for Iran in the nuclear context are also under discussion in the wake of a recent rapprochement between Israel and Arab States.*

**Keywords:** Iran, US, JCPOA, Distrust, Game Theory, Israel, NPT

### Introduction

The Iranian Nuclear Program has been one of the major reasons for disharmony between Iran and United States. The uncertainty over Iran's nuclear ambitions has its roots in the 1979 revolution and its aftermath. Though Iran acquired nuclear knowledge and related facilities in late 1950s under the "Atoms for Peace" program initiated by the US,

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didn't pose any threat to the regional order back then.<sup>1</sup> Iran, under Pahlavi Monarch Muhammad Reza Shah, was not only an ally and in cliental relationship with the US,<sup>2</sup> but also emerged as the security guarantor for the US policies against the Soviet Union. Furthermore, by signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on July 1· 1968, Iran like other nations, not only addressed the proliferation concerns of international community but also increased the prospects of nuclear cooperation with the US. During that time India, Pakistan and Israel, all were struggling hard to get their hands on the bomb; Shah's intentions to make Iran a Nuclear State manifested<sup>3</sup>. The nuclear-armed Iran under Shah could have been a strengthening factor for the US against Soviet Union rather than a threat. But the domestic turmoil which led to the revolutionary stride within Iran transferred the nuclear technology to the new Islamic and anti-US government which became the source of enmity for the US. From there, the nuclear capability of Iran was perceived as a threat by the US and allies due to Iran's exclusion from the US camp, and its consistent opposition to the US policies in the region.

Since the revolution in Iran, West, mainly the US, has been trying to rein the nuclear ambitions of Iran and prevent Iran from reaching the threshold. Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was the first ever step that was taken towards resolving Iran's nuclear crisis to the satisfaction of each party. For Iran, it was important from the perspective of lifting up the sanctions. For the West, it guarantees the regional and world security by making Iran compliant to carrying out the non-military nuclear program only. However, the withdrawal of the US from the Iran Nuclear Deal in 2018 has compelled Iran to look for other options i.e. building up its military hardware and enriching the uranium beyond the deal's limits. This is because of the new round of sanctions by the US has seriously damaged the Iranian economy. Resultantly, the warning of partial withdrawal by Iran from the deal has already raised questions over its viability.

With the US having pulled out of the deal, Europe's failure to bring the US back and Iran's policy of partial withdrawal, the deal gives the impression to be sabotaged but in post Trump period Joe Biden

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<sup>1</sup> Shinsuke Tomotsugu, "After the Hegemony of the "Atoms for Peace" Program: Multilateral Non-proliferation Policy under the Nixon and Ford Administrations," *The Japanese Journal of American Studies*, No. 27 (2016): 167-188, [http://www.jaas.gr.jp/jjas/pdf/2016/08\\_TOMOTSUGU.pdf](http://www.jaas.gr.jp/jjas/pdf/2016/08_TOMOTSUGU.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Mark J. Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501735387>.

<sup>3</sup> Seyed Hossein Mousavian, *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir*, (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012), 50.

administration has showed intentions to resuscitate it. The article first discusses the historical events regarding post-Revolution Iranian nuclear program and then analyses the scenario of partial withdrawal of Iran from the deal, and its impacts and consequences for the region. The article also discusses the possibility of having another deal.

## Theoretical Framework

The article analyses the case of Iran's nuclear deal through the prism of Game Theory. The theory was developed by Jon Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern in 1944 to solve the problems of economics primarily.<sup>4</sup> However, the theory expands its scope in political science through the extensive development of sub-concepts. In international politics, game theory takes the states as players of the game that strategize their actions in response to the emerging situations. It provides a comprehension of available options, outcomes and pay offs to each player in order to assure the rational decision-making process. As per the theory, the actions of the states are dependent upon both their own decisions and the behaviour of other states i.e. independent and interdependent respectively.<sup>5</sup> In the context of Iran's nuclear issue and the US-Iran adversarial relations, the prevailing developments are based upon two factors i.e. the mutual distrust of each other's actions and the overall unaltered scenario after any interactions. Hence, two sub-categories of Game Theory would address these problems – Prisoner's Dilemma and Zero Sum Game.

In prisoner's dilemma, two players A and B are provided with the situation separately in which their mutual cooperation would benefit both while if one defects, the other would have the repercussions while the first one would be benefitted.<sup>6</sup> Since, both the players are sceptical of each other's action; they both tend to defect against the other in order to assure their respective interests. Nevertheless, such an approach would eventually be catastrophic for both the players. Similarly, both US and Iran view each other's actions with suspicion and try to maximize their own self-interest instead of going towards cooperation. Given the withdrawal of the US from Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the distrust is further deep-rooted into the psychologies of the US and Iranian policymakers. Hence, both the states tend to maximize their interests at the expense of the other. By sanctioning Iran's nuclear program, the US

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<sup>4</sup> John Von Neumann, Oskar Morgenstern, *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1944).

<sup>5</sup> Bellal Ahmed Bhuiyan, "An Overview of Game Theory and Some Applications," *Philosophy and Progress* LIX-LX, no. 1-2 (2016): 111-128.

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth A. Oye, "Explaining Cooperation under Anarchy: Hypotheses and Strategies," *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (1985): 1-24.

consolidates its partnership with the regional allies and tries to cripple Iran's economy to revise its regional policies. On the other hand, instead of complying with the US demands, Iran's behaviour is confrontational i.e. resuming the enrichment of Uranium.

Aligned with the aforementioned concept, the other subset of Game Theory i.e. Zero Sum Game highlights the future course of the Iran Nuclear Deal. Zero Sum Game is the situation in which the gains of one player are equal to the losses of another or vice versa. Hence, the net gain or loss remains zero.<sup>7</sup> This approach highlights the continuous entanglement and the persistence of the conflict between the two players. Unlike this, in a non-zero sum game, both the players cooperate with each other to conclude a mediocre deal which would benefit both. The preconditions set by the US for Iran revolve around its missile program and regional policies in which Iran is not willing to concede. Such a scenario reflects the situation in which the conflict would persist. Hence, if the US manages to employ its policy against Iran successfully, this would provoke Iran to respond considering the loss it would have to bear. Thus, the vitality of the deal lies in cooperation and compromise while analysing the future of the deal.

### **Post-Revolution Iranian Motives**

The nuclear program of Iran flourished before the revolution due to two main reasons. One was American assistance while the other was Shah's personal interest in acquiring nuclear weapons<sup>8</sup>. With the advent of the revolution, both of these factors were gone. The rift with the US led to the severed diplomatic relations which persists till today. The new regime in Iran, inspired by the religious tendencies, drew laws on the basis of Islamic Shariah. For them, any such weapon which would cause the mass destruction was strictly forbidden which led to the decision of Ayatollah Khomeini to issue a religious decree (fatwa) against use of nuclear weapons.<sup>9</sup>

The main logic for Iran's nuclear program in post 1979 era is peaceful purposes of nuclear technology like its use for agriculture,

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<sup>7</sup> Peter G. Bennett, "Modelling Decisions in International Relations: Game Theory and Beyond," *Mershon International Studies Review* 39, no. 1 (1995): 19-52.

<sup>8</sup> Md. Thowhidul Islam, "The Nuclearization of Iran and Policy of Russia," *Asian and African Studies* 22, no. 2 (2013): 248-278.

<sup>9</sup> Rolf Mowatt Larssen, *Islam and the Bomb Religious Justification For and Against Nuclear Weapons*, (Cambridge: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2011), 50.

medicine and as an alternative source of cheap energy.<sup>10</sup> Such objectives can be justified in wake of the US led European Union and UNSC sanctions against Iran. According to some western sources the war with Iraq and Saddam's chemical weapon attacks on Iranian cities where the US remained silent, pushed Iran to look for an enhanced security option. From there, the perceived revival of Iranian Nuclear Program occurred. Not only Iran opened up new research centres for nuclear program but also enhanced collaboration with China and Russia to equip itself with nuclear reactors; it was perceived by the US as a formation of anti-US bloc.<sup>11</sup> Such collaborations were termed as peaceful and for civilian purposes by the Iranian authorities. The concerns, however, deepened due to ambiguity over Iranian nuclear sites which were inaccessible and led to various speculations. The US nuclear cooperation with Iran led it to have a blind eye towards the possibility of a nuclear Iran under Shah by believing that it would not be a threat to the US interests in the region.<sup>12</sup> However, drastic change of events and alliances after the revolution made the US concerned regarding Iranian Nuclear Program. The main factor behind the US suspicion was its inaccessibility to Iranian nuclear sites and its intentions of reviving nuclear program during Iran-Iraq War.

Iranian attempts to make the nuclear plants functional and the US suspicion over it differed greatly in their respective assessments. For Iran, resuming its nuclear program and cooperation with China and Russia served three purposes. Firstly, it helped to overcome the energy crisis; eventually overcoming the economic hardships which erupted after the devastating war with Iraq. Secondly, to have the nuclear collaboration that would serve as a deterrent against the enemies. The unrestricted power given to Saddam by the US against Iran could only be countered by acquiring a similar supremacy over the technology i.e. nuclear arsenal against chemical weapons. Lastly, since Iran had always criticised the US for its duplicitous standards, turning towards East i.e. China and Russia, validated its role in international politics and strengthened its diplomatic posture to overcome the isolation.

Amidst such mistrust, it was vital to look for a diplomatic solution, which would be in accordance with the demands of each party. Two agreements between the international community and Iran over the

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<sup>10</sup> A. A. Gul, "Iran's Pursuit of Peaceful Nuclear Technology," *Pakistan Horizon* 65, No. 1 (January 2012): 35-52.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iran and Nuclear Weapons," *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, March 24, 2000, [https://csiswebsiteprod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fspublic/legacy\\_files/files/media/csis/pubs/iranbackgro und032100.pdf](https://csiswebsiteprod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fspublic/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/iranbackgro und032100.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Rohan Alvandi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: The United States and Iran in the Cold War*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2014), 138-140.

Iranian nuclear program have been reached so far i.e. Paris Agreement and JCPOA. Both of these initiatives involved the compromise and compensation by both the parties, however, these agreements couldn't survive, partly due to the suspicion of each other's actions.

### **The Failure of Paris Agreement**

Paris Agreement was the first ever effort to find the purposeful solution of Iranian Nuclear Program while offering incentives and demanding restrains from Iran. The agreement was finalized after the mutual consensus of three European states, United Kingdom, France and Germany. In exchange, Iran would be assisted by the international community for the development of its Civil Nuclear Program, granting Iran the international acceptance for its Nuclear Program.<sup>13</sup> Prior to this, Iran's commitment to accepting IAEA's (International Atomic Energy Agency) Additional Protocols in 2003 also showed signs of Iran's conciliatory approach with the international community.<sup>14</sup> However, Iran's persistence in not allowing the IAEA's inspection team to test the material at nuclear sites was followed by its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement after the election of Ahmadinejad as the President which depicted the gravity of scepticism over the persistence of such agreements. Eventually, two main factors led to its failure.

### **Absence of UNSC Resolution**

The first reason was its incompetency of not having the legal binding.<sup>15</sup> There was no UNSC resolution which would ratify it and bring the negotiating parties under the premises of international law. The US was not part of this agreement and it was more of a European led initiative to avoid any military catastrophe and to create the prospects of establishing the trade relations with energy rich Iran.

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<sup>13</sup> Colette Mazzucelli, "EU3-Iranian Nuclear Diplomacy: Implications for US Policy in the Middle East," *EUROPEAN Union Miami Analysis* 4, no. 6 (2007): 1-10.

<sup>14</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency, "Iran Signs Additional Protocol on Nuclear Safeguards," December 18, 2003, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/iran-signs-additional-protocol-nuclear-safeguards>.

<sup>15</sup> IAEA, "Communication dated 26 November 2004 Received from the Permanent Representatives of France, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Kingdom Concerning the Agreement Signed in Paris on 15 November 2004," INFCIRC/637, (Vienna), November 26, 2004, <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/infircs/2004/infirc637.pdf>.

## Non-Clarity of the Postulates

Second reason was the ambiguity in the postulates of the agreement. The agreement highlighted the necessity for Iran to quit the conversion activities of fission material. However, being the signatory of Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Iran argued regarding its right to have the nuclear technology for peaceful purposes as cited in Article IV and Article V of NPT.<sup>16</sup> This was deemed by European states as breach of the agreement as it could clandestinely tantamount to Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. Thus, by depriving Iran of enriching the uranium under NPT conditions, finally led to the disengagement between Iran and the European States.

## JCPOA: The Purposeful Engagement

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was concluded between five permanent members of UNSC in addition with Germany (P5 +1). Under this agreement, Iran was bound to keep the Uranium enrichment under 3.67 percent for 15 years and no further production of IR-1 centrifuges.<sup>17</sup> In exchange, the UN, the US and EU imposed economic sanctions on Iran would be lifted in a systematic manner.<sup>18</sup> The postulates of the deal were modelled in such style which could ensure the positive-sum-game for both sides.

## Domestic Political Changes in the US and Iran

Since the beginning of his Presidency in 2008, Obama had taken a reconciliatory approach towards Iran while emphasizing upon the negotiations rather than the conflictual policy which marked a shift from the policies of his predecessors.<sup>19</sup> Obama tried to engage Iran in direct talks which remained the pivot of his foreign policy throughout his tenure. From the Iranian end, victory of Reformist candidate, Hassan Rouhani, in the 2013 Presidential Elections, provided the ray of hope that the engagement would be reciprocated by Iranians. The telephonic

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<sup>16</sup> IAEA, "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," INFCIRC/140, (London, Moscow, Washington), April 22, 1970, <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/infcircs/1970/infcirc140.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Arms Control Association, "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) at a Glance," October 2020, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Claudia Castiglioni, "Obama's Policy toward Iran: Comparing First and Second Term," *ISPI Online*, no 220 (2013): 1-12.

conversation between Obama and Rouhani<sup>20</sup> indicated the willingness of both sides to find the diplomatic solution as it was the first time since 1979 that the talks at such high level had taken place between the two countries. Through this inter-subjectivity, both the parties agreed to have nuclear negotiations.

### **Legality of the Deal**

Unlike the Paris Agreement, JCPOA was validated due to its ratification from UNSC under Resolution 2231, hence making it a part of International Law, requiring each participant to endorse it. To prevent the deal from falling into jeopardy, proper mechanism was channelized to consolidate the power of deal and to stop the parties from unilateral withdrawal. Paragraph 36 of JCPOA, arguably hinted at the procedure which should have been adopted in case of any concerns shared by any party. Moreover, endorsing the UNSCR 2231, the Vienna Convention of 1969<sup>21</sup> had also put the responsibility upon each party to fulfil the commitments made under JCPOA in accordance with law binding agreements.

### **The US Withdrawal: Rationale and the Failure of the Deal**

Despite the extensively drafted work that went into finalisation of JCPOA, the US withdrew from the deal on May 18, 2018. It proved to be the provoking factor in the deterioration of US-Iran ties. Despite the consensus of each state, the withdrawal of the US left the space open for other actors to contemplate over the viability of the deal. The main two factors which led to the US' contradictory position over the deal have their roots in strategic decisions regarding the Middle East.

### **Strengthening the Ties with Israel and KSA**

Israel and Saudi Arabia, the two main rivals of Iran in the Middle East, were the two strong voices which showed their discontent for the deal. The main reason behind their opposition was the regional dominance and mistrust of Iran. Both the states found the sanctions relief for Iran as a

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<sup>20</sup> Jeff Mason, Louis Charbonneau, "Obama, Iran's Rouhani hold Historic Phone Call," *Reuters*, September 28, 2013, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-assembly-iran/obama-irans-rouhani-hold-historic-phone-call-idusbre98q16s20130928>.

<sup>21</sup> Nader Mardani and Mohammad Mehdi Hooshmand, "JCPOA; A Dialectical Paradigm of Treaty and other International Instruments," *Journal of Politics and Law* 9, no. 3 (2016): 70-84.

step towards Iranian influence over the region.<sup>22</sup> Both Israel and KSA shared their concerns regarding Iranian sponsored non-state actors like Hamas and Hezbollah against Israel and Houthis against KSA. Thus, the sanctions relief would eventually add up to Iran's economy allow it to fund more freely to forge its interests against Israel and KSA. Furthermore, the deal didn't specify the obligation of dismantling the nuclear program of Iran wholeheartedly rather it only delayed the Iranian attempts to make the bomb by 10 years in centrifuge enrichment and fifteen years in uranium enrichment.<sup>23</sup>

Hence, the fear of the abrogation of the deal was pretty much realistic as both Israel and KSA shared the important strategic partnership with the US in shaping a favourable regional order. Thus, the objections of both KSA and Israel on the Nuclear Deal were believed to be the accelerating factor for US withdrawal from JCPOA. The fears quickly materialised under Trump's presidency, which reflected the second feature in the failure of the deal.

### **Trump's Policy of Revisiting the Deal amidst Growing Iranian Influence**

Although IAEA's repeated assurances of Iran's commitments to the essence of deal had already nullified the claim of "Iran going nuclear"; yet Trump's rise to presidency was largely considered as a gloomy factor for the future of the deal. Being a vocal critic of the deal, Trump had always advocated abolishing the agreement which he believed to be the "worst, horrible and laughable" deal.<sup>24</sup> The main factor which contributed in his withdrawal from the deal was the growing Iranian influence over the region. The major source of power for Iran in the region lie not in the strength of its nuclear program, instead its missile program and funding of state and non-partners are the main causes of anxiety for the US. Iran's self-sufficiency in its missile programs and transfer of rockets to Hezbollah, Hamas and possibly to Houthis as well, had alarmed the entire region.<sup>25</sup> Such hurdles made it difficult for the US to implement its policies

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<sup>22</sup> Kori Schake, "Missiles and More: Iran's Threats to Israel and the Middle East," *Strategika*, no. 35 (2016): 8-10.

<sup>23</sup> Paul K. Kerr and Kenneth Katzman, "Iran Nuclear Agreement and U.S. Exit," *Congressional Research Service*, Report No R43333 (Washington DC), July 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R43333.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> BBC, "Trump on Iran Deal: Worst, Horrible, Laughable," April 26, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-41587428>.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Einhorn and Vann H. Van Diepen, "Constraining Iran's Missile Capabilities," *Brookings Institute* (Washington DC), March 2019, [https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2019/03/FP\\_20190321\\_missile\\_program\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2019/03/FP_20190321_missile_program_WEB.pdf).

in Iraq and Syria. Thus, for the US and its allies, dismantling Iran's military nuclear program was not sufficient, instead, devising the alternative strategies to halt Iranian influence was deemed necessary by the US.

## **The US Post-Withdrawal Strategies**

The main precursor for JCPOA was to make the region peaceful and to work in a collaborative manner. However, JCPOA benefitted Iran more than it has benefitted the US. The enhanced influence of Iran was seen by the US as the cause of disruption for its policies in the Middle East. As the US was unable to limit Iranian activities in the region, the US employed two alternative strategies in post withdrawal period to shape Iranian actions in accordance with its regional designs. However, both the strategies had backfired in the following manner.

### **Economic Sanctions with a Maximum Pressure Campaign**

The US imposition of sanctions upon Iran came under effect on May 2018 that were targeted to hit Iranian energy, trade, shipping, banking sectors and various other fronts. One year after the deal, the sanctioning prevailed with no solution and compromise from either side. The US imposed sanctions also made the US allies, who were buying Iranian oil, obliged to cut their dealings with Iran. Evidently, Iranian economy, for which the oil trade is the backbone, suffered greatly. By putting the economic sanctions, the US hoped to pressurize Iran for revising the Nuclear Deal. Iran had already experienced the social unrest by the end of 2019 due to faltering economy.<sup>26</sup> However, the US attempt of sanctioning Iran didn't have any impact on Iran's behaviour; instead, it created the dilemma for the US in two ways

Firstly, the absence of Iranian oil would put more pressure on other oil-producing countries especially the US allies like KSA and UAE. Second would be Iranian threat to block the Strait of Hormuz- the choke point for oil trade.

Another aspect that the US administration misperceived was the Iranian domestic outrage against the regime. More than the regime, Iranians considered the US sanctions as the cause of their sufferings. The US plan of regime change in Iran could backfire as Iranian State would utilize every means necessary to inculcate the anti-American sentiments within the society. This is because of its credibility regarding the fulfilment of commitments it made under the JCPOA. Furthermore, due to sanctions, current observers have highlighted that it is the public who is suffering

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<sup>26</sup> Seth G. Jones and Danika Newlee, "Iran's Protests and the Threat to Domestic Stability," *CSIS* (Washington DC), November 2019, [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fspublic/publication/Jones\\_IranProtestsStability\\_FINAL.pdf](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fspublic/publication/Jones_IranProtestsStability_FINAL.pdf).

more than the Iranian government, which would give the opportunity to hardliners to consolidate their position within the social fabric of Iran.<sup>27</sup>

### **Military Confrontation: Launching Direct Attacks on Iranian Targets**

The second approach is the US military attacks against Iran. The tensions between the two sparked dramatically after the US strike on January 03, 2020, which killed Qasem Soleimani, the head of Quds Force of IRGC. It was the first incident when the US had directly attacked and killed the Iranian official. Prior to that, the US drone was also caught flying near the Iranian territory which was downed by Iranian authorities leaving the US much frustrated. The decision of targeting General Soleimani was aimed at signalling Iran the consequences of its continued deviant behaviour against the US interests. However, this proved to be the last nail in the coffin for the US troubles in the region. Not only Iran emerged as the victor by yielding the diplomatic, moral and regional support but its response was equally detrimental for the US when the largest military base holding the US troops in Iraq was attacked by Iranian missiles.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, Iraqi parliament's decision of expelling the US troops from its soil also favoured Iran. Nevertheless, as the frustration of the US grew, two developments complicated the situation for Iran. Firstly, there was rapprochement between Israel and the Gulf States i.e. Bahrain and UAE. The development signals towards the formation of the US-led bloc to counter the Iranian threat in the region. The second development is the killing of Iranian Nuclear Scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, in November 2020<sup>29</sup> that is attributed to Israel's covert operation. Prior to this, Iranian nuclear site at Natanz also caught fire on June 30, which was assumed to be a cyber-attack by either the US or Israel.<sup>30</sup> Such developments signified the increasingly militaristic approach of directly contesting Iran, both regionally and internally, in order to force it to suspend its nuclear program.

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<sup>27</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Maximum Pressure: US Economic Sanctions Harm Iranians' Right to Health," October 29, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/10/29/maximum-pressure/us-economic-sanctions-harm-iranians-right-health>.

<sup>28</sup> Christopher M. Blanchard, "Iraq and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Services*, Report no IF10404 (Washington DC), December 2020, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/IF10404.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> BBC, "Mohsen Fakhrizadeh: Iran Scientist Killed by Remote-Controlled Weapon," November 30, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55128970>.

<sup>30</sup> Jiyar Gol, "Iran Blasts: What is behind Mysterious Fires at Key Sites?" *BBC*, July 6, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-53305940>.

## Iran's Post-Withdrawal Options

Since the withdrawal of the US, Iran has been threatening to abandon the deal. To understand the severity of the situation, it is vital to analyse the statements of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. Principally, the current Supreme Leader follows the footsteps of his predecessor, Ayatollah Khomeini in establishing the immoral basis for nuclear weapons under Islamic Jurisprudence.<sup>31</sup> However, the concerning issue is the ambiguity of the speech which states the “using of Nuclear weapons” is forbidden but does not mention any case of stockpiling them for deterrence purpose.<sup>32</sup> The practical implication of this was demonstrated when Iran vowed to abandon its commitment under the JCPOA after the killing of General Soleimani.<sup>33</sup> Following are the possible post-Iranian withdrawal scenarios that are likely to prevail.

### The Cessation of Diplomatic Efforts

The US, by its withdrawal, has made Iranian allegations upon the US as “*not trustworthy state*” legitimate. By imposing sanctions, the US has made Iran's economy suffer which has brought Iranian reformist President, Hassan Rouhani under the fiery criticism as it has worked against his election campaign narrative of bringing prosperity and economic stability. Resultantly, the hardliners have become more confident in their claim of opposing any interaction with the West and the US.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, Iran has repeatedly emphasized upon its JCPOA commitments conditioning the reciprocity from other JCPOA parties, now called P4+1. However, in order to thwart the US sanctions, Iran has given up its compliance over some of the JCPOA postulates, including the exceeding of JCPOA limits on heavy water stockpiles and the concentration

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<sup>31</sup> Michael Eisenstadt, Medhi Khalaji, “Nuclear Fatwa Religion and Politics in Iran's Proliferation Strategy,” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, Policy Focus no. 115 (Washington DC), September 2011, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/3344>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Einhorn, “Averting a New Iranian Nuclear Crisis,” *Brookings*, Policy Focus (Washington DC), January 2020, [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Einhorn\\_Policy2020\\_Averting-a-new-Iranian-nuclear-crisis.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Einhorn_Policy2020_Averting-a-new-Iranian-nuclear-crisis.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Maximilian Hoell, “If the JCPOA Collapses: Implications for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and International Security,” *European Leadership Network*, Global Security Policy Brief (London), December 2018, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/If-the-JCPOA-Collapses-Maximilian-Hoell-Updated-08012019.pdf>.

of uranium stockpiles.<sup>35</sup> The action is aimed to force the US to re-join the deal.

### **Halting the Attempts of Non-Proliferation**

Withdrawing from the Iranian Nuclear Deal would inevitably pose the daunting challenge for diplomatic proceedings with North Korea over its nuclear program. Any talks with North Korea would carry with itself the eccentric, untrustworthy and suspicious picture of the US. The trust deficit would make it difficult for both the US and North Korea to come to any conclusion as the glimpse of it was already shown in Vietnam where the negotiations met with a disastrous end.<sup>36</sup> Apart from the non-proliferation, the US image as the non-partisan party over the international issues would receive a damaging blow which would further obstruct the US from bringing other states, both aligned and nonaligned, to convergence over any international issue.

Furthermore, the killing of Iranian General Soleimani and Nuclear Scientist, Fakhrizadeh, could change the official posturing of Iran regarding Nuclear weapons. The example of Libyan President Gaddafi is evident whose overthrow occurred only after his abandoning of nuclear stockpiles. Being sceptical of the US actions, Iran might look towards officially acquiring the weapons to bring in the deterrence factor and once it would happen, the entire region would be engulfed in nuclear race. Iran has already breached the 3.67 per cent limit on uranium enrichment and has started to develop the new centrifuges against the essence of the deal.<sup>37</sup>

### **Non- Credibility of EU+3**

The party which is caught in-between the US-Iran scuffle is undoubtedly the European states. On the one hand, they are determined to protect the deal while on the other they are unable to convince the US to return to the agreement, hence, leaving Iran hopeless from their conduct. Europe's inability to provide Iran the assurances has made Iran frustrated.

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<sup>35</sup> Kenneth Katzman, Kathleen J. McInnis and Clayton Thomas, "U.S.-Iran Conflict and Implications for U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Services*, Report R45795 (Washington DC), May 8, 2020, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R45795.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> Choe Sang-Hun, "North Korea Threatens to Scuttle Talks with US and Resume Tests," *New York Times*, March 15, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/15/world/asia/north-korea-kim-jong-un-nuclear.html>.

<sup>37</sup> Kelsey Davenport and Julia Masterson, "Iran's Nuclear Program Remains on Steady Trajectory," *Arms Control Association*, September 10, 2020, <https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/2020-09-10/irans-nuclear-program-remains-steady-trajectory>.

Moreover, Iran has been under the impression since its inception as Islamic Republic that Europeans like Americans are equally untrustworthy.<sup>38</sup> This posture of Europe would make Iran more inclined towards China and Russia resulting in the formation of an alternative bloc. Furthermore, Europe's incompetence in taking any concrete steps in the face of the US withdrawal reflected its weakening status<sup>39</sup> in the international politics. The tensions between Iran and EU arose prominently after the confiscation of Iran's oil tanker at Strait of Gibraltar by British Navy and Iran's subsequent seizure of British naval vessels in July 2019.<sup>40</sup> The standoff between Iran and EU further intensified after the EU's statement of "putting the deal under threat" in response to Iranian activity of enriching uranium to 20 per cent at its underground Fordow facility.<sup>41</sup> The consistent attempts by EU for forcing Iran to observe JCPOA limitations, while displaying its incapacity in bringing the US to the deal, exhibits the negative response in sustaining the deal.

### **Iran Nuclear Deal in Post-Trump Era**

The defeat of President Trump in 2020 Presidential Elections and the victory of Democratic candidate, Joe Biden, have led many experts into believing that the Iran Nuclear Deal might be saved from falling into jeopardy. Joe Biden has played an instrumental role as Obama's Vice President in concluding the deal with Iran and has vowed to restore the diplomatic efforts with Iran.

During his election campaign, Joe Biden repeatedly promised to re-enter the JCPOA which Obama negotiated in 2015 and Trump withdrew in 2018.<sup>42</sup> Joe Biden's victory in the presidential elections increased the

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<sup>38</sup> Khamenei, "Vicious European Countries should not be Trusted: Imam Khamenei," September 26, 2019, <https://english.khamenei.ir/news/7066/Vicious-European-countries-should-not-be-trusted-Imam-Khamenei>.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Czulda, "European Failure to Safeguard Iran Deal Shows EU is Still a Paper Tiger," *The Atlantic Council*, August 14, 2018, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/european-failure-to-safeguard-iran-deal-shows-eu-is-still-a-paper-tiger/>.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Wolgelenter, "British-Flagged Tanker Leaves Iran, Two Months After It Was Seized," *New York Times*, September 27, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/27/world/middleeast/iran-uk-oil-tanker-stena-impero.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Euracity, "EU Warns Iran Enrichment would Threaten Nuclear Deal," January 04, 2021, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eu-warns-iran-enrichment-would-threaten-nuclear-deal/>.

<sup>42</sup> Garrett Nada, "Joe Biden on Iran," *The Iran Primer*, United States Institutes of Peace, May 10, 2021 Original: November 9, 2020, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2020/nov/09/joe-biden-iran>.

prospects that the US and Iran will return to full compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal. After assuming power, Joe Biden launched new diplomacy to get both Tehran and Washington to fully comply with the 2015 nuclear deal. Iran refused to meet directly with the United States unless it first lifted sanctions imposed by the Trump administration. After weeks of behind-the-scenes efforts, the E.U. announced on April 2, 2021 that it would convene indirect talks including the six major world powers and Iran.

It was expected that Biden's administration would try to conclude the dialogues before Iran's Presidential elections on Jun 18, 2021-as concluding dialogue with moderate Iranian President Rouhani was much easier, and it could provide chance of success of moderates in coming presidential elections in Iran. But historic distrust and tough attitude of both the parties delayed dialogue which appeared as one of the important factors in moderate Rouhani's defeat and ultra conservative Ebrahim Raisi's success in June 21, Presidential elections. Ultimately Iranian representative announced that Iran would not return to Vienna for a seventh round of talks until after Raisi's inauguration.

Biden's attempt to restore JCPOA faces challenges in three aspects. First, Biden's plan of returning to JCPOA is conditioned on Iran's "strict compliance" with JCPOA provisions.<sup>43</sup> On the contrary, Iran demanded the unconditional return of the US to the deal and rejected the possibility of any further negotiations.<sup>44</sup> Second, Biden is also considering new geopolitical realities in the Middle East and has vowed to work closely with Israel to counter Iran's "destabilizing activities" in the region.<sup>45</sup> The final challenge is the domestic political landscape of Iran. The triumph of an ultra-conservative cleric, Ebrahim Raisi, in Iranian Presidential Elections of 2021 has made the prospects of mutually agreed deal between the US and Iran further complicated. Hence, aforementioned challenges have led to the persistence of conflict in the US-Iran relations.

Nevertheless, two important factors could play as intervening variables in this regard. Firstly, the hard-line approach of Iran after the elections might be softened due to the dire economic situation. Apart from other reasons, one major element which led to the defeat of Iranian

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<sup>43</sup> Paul Fraioli (ed.), "Prospects for the Iran Nuclear Deal," *Strategic Comments* 26, No. 8 (2020): i-iii

<sup>44</sup> Reuters, "Supreme Leader Dismisses Talks as Iran Looks to Post-Trump Future," November 24, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/iran-usa-sanctions-int/supreme-leader-dismisses-talks-as-iran-looks-to-post-trump-future-idUSKBN284130>.

<sup>45</sup> CNN, "Joe Biden: There's a Smarter Way to be Tough on Iran," September 13, 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/09/13/opinions/smarter-way-to-be-tough-on-iran-joe-biden/index.html>.

Reformists was their failure in fulfilling the promises of a better economy. Resultantly, the new administration of Raisi faces the pressure to deliver the economic benefits to the masses. This would ultimately force them to give up some of their demands and strike a new deal with the US. Secondly, the US policy of having minimum interference in the Middle Eastern affairs is likely to prevail during the Biden Administration. Considering this fact, the US would guarantee the regional security framework of its allies to take up the responsibility of their own security while lessening the Iranian threat through a deal. One manifestation of this has already been observed in the secret talks held between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Iraq on April 8, 2021.

However, the aforementioned two factors are expected to have the minimal influence in reframing the trust between the US and Iran due to the on-going regional rifts. Since 2020, Iran has witnessed various security lapses which are linked with the Israel spy agency, Mossad. The assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist in November 2020 and the attacks on the major nuclear site at Natanz in July 2020 and April 2021 reflect the increasingly aggressive stance of Israel against the Iranian nuclear program. The attacks are aimed to provoke Iranian response in subduing the efforts of nuclear talks. Moreover, the escalation in Gaza (May 9-21, 2021), in which Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad fired rockets in reaction to the Israeli airstrikes, has been attributed to the Iranian sponsorship of these organizations.<sup>46</sup> The current situation in this regard, is intricate as neither side trusts the intentions of the other. As US is pivotal for assuring Israel's security and Iran is sensitive about its nuclear program, the geopolitical events across the Middle East present a gloomy picture for reconciliation between the US and Iran over the success of a viable nuclear deal. Another important factor which can seriously influence the dialogue process w.r.t JCPOA between Iran and the US is the recent culmination of negotiations between Beijing and Tehran to sign a twenty-five-years \$400 billion strategic and economic partnership on March 27, 2021.<sup>47</sup> Despite the US sanctions against Iran, Beijing has signed this accord with Tehran, bringing both the US rivals closer to each other. Importance of lifting the US sanctions has comparatively fallen for Iran and it can enhance Tehran's power to bargain with Washington. Moreover US withdrawal from Afghanistan is also increasing Iran's regional status.

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<sup>46</sup> Kasra Aarabi, "Don't Let Iran's Regime Win the Battle of Hearts and Minds in Gaza," *The Washington Institute*, June 1, 2021, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pdf/view/16799/en>.

<sup>47</sup> Ezgi Uzun, "ANALYSIS - The Iran-China Deal amid the Global Power Transition," *Anadolu Agency*, April, 14, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/analysis-the-iran-china-deal-amid-the-global-power-transition/2208353>.

## **Conclusion**

In the international arena, the states act as players and utilize ways which allow them the maximum utility. Hence, states act rationally and keep adopting new strategies. Considering game theory, U.S. and Iran are players of the game that strategize their actions in response to the emerging situations towards JCPOA. Both the rival players bear in mind the comprehension of available options, outcomes and pay offs for each while engaging in rational decision-making process. Mutual distrust between Washington and Tehran is creating Prisoner's Dilemma, and situation appear as a Zero Sum Game etc. The negotiations between P5+1 and Iran were generally aimed at resolving the Middle Eastern crisis. However, in Trump's Presidency, the perception of the US administration changed as there was no clear postulate in the deal to limit the Iranian missile program? Resultantly, the re-imposition of sanctions brought both the US and Iran in confrontation with each other. Under such circumstances, not only Iran responded with determination but the attitude of European states also made the US a warring dragon.

The deterioration of the relations between Iran and the US has alarmed the region of the new conflict. Though the possibility of an all-out war is least, but Iran will continue to play its cards strategically through proxies. On the other hand, the current situation depicts the diminishing role of the US in the region and it might burden the regional allies like Israel and KSA to manage the situation on their own. This continuous persistence of Iran will bring it into conflict with regional states while in the absence of the US, Iran would have a bright chance to dominate the region.

The imbalance of regional status quo towards either side may provoke the counteraction and the new crisis could emerge. To prevent any new catastrophic event, it is vital for both the US and Iran to ensure the interaction on consistent basis. The failure to do so will have implications for both sides. For the US, putting any further pressure on Iran will unmistakably bring the latter closer to China and Russia. China has already pledged to invest \$400 billion dollars in Iran. The investments of China will prove helpful to Iran as it continues to suffer economically in the wake of the US sanctions. Hence, the partnership between Iran and China is expected to bolster the mutual relations and will challenge the US regional primacy in the Middle East. For Iran, the turning down of the US invitation for negotiations comes at the cost of further economic hardships. The recent waves of protests reflected the growing resentments of Iranian population against the hardships.

Hence, it is vital for both the US and Iran to reengage in productive manners to revitalize the deal. The back channel diplomacy has been active in this regard and steps are being taken. It is noted that the US and Iran might eventually come to the negotiation table. However, the damage

which has been done during the Trump's Presidency is difficult to compensate. Furthermore, the reengagement comes with a lot of challenges i.e. the strengthened footprints of other global powers in the region and the greater resistance from the US allies. Nevertheless, the solution to the ever-growing tensions is the compromise from both the sides. Conclusively, although the chances of deal being restored to pre-withdrawal status are high in Biden's Presidency yet the actual circumstances on the ground, especially the geopolitical dynamics on regional and international level as well as dominance of hardliners in Iran, make the sustainability of such a deal quite grim.

## RUSSIAN DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY STATECRAFT IN SYRIA

Saira Nawaz Abbasi\* & Nazir Hussain\*\*

### Abstract

*Russia has carefully employed its military and diplomatic tools of statecraft in the Syrian conflict. The Syrian war has been a quagmire with the diversity of actors involved having national, regional, and global interests. Russia's decisive role and direct involvement in the conflict has brought it to the forefront of Middle Eastern politics. Russia after taking control of the Syrian airbase can carry out missions across the Levant and Eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, Russia has not only courted the regional states into its side particularly Turkey but has also successfully averted any direct clash with the US and Israel in Syria. Russia has been able to demonstrate its strategic will to take decisive actions and transforming the risks into opportunities. Syria has brought the Russians back to the international decision-making as an important player. Moreover; Syria has provided Russia with a geopolitical advantage in the Middle East and to uphold Russian status as a global power.*

**Keywords:** *Russia, Statecraft, Military Engagement, Diplomacy, Syrian Crisis*

### Introduction

Rising powers have greater stakes in the systemic changes at the regional and global levels. To acquire a favourable regional and global environment, they indulge in making various efforts. Such states, after acquiring enough power utilize all available instruments of statecraft, enhancing their potential and scope. A similar pattern of behaviour has been followed by the Russian Federation in contemporary times, which has emerged from years of post-Soviet economic and political turmoil to re-assert itself as a great power.

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Russian foreign policy has taken advantage of external factors particularly the Syrian conflict to maximize its influence and promote its global interests. China has also supported Russia in vetoing the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on the issue of US dominance in the Middle East; hence, sharing mutual determination of promoting polycentric international order. The Syrian crisis has provided an opportunity for Russia to project its military power in the initial phase of the conflict. Since its intervention in Syria in 2015, Russia has also successfully demonstrated its diplomatic statecraft in an effective manner. Its improved relations with Turkey and the way it has dealt Syrian peace process signifies Russia as a key player in dealing with international issues.

Moreover, regional politics has become relevant in contemporary times in the wake of a changing international order. Therefore, Russia has expanded the geographical scale of its foreign policy towards the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Russian outreach to various regions constitutes its grand strategy aimed at a multi-polar world in which the Russian Federation would be an independent center of power. As Russia has become more resourceful due to its political and economic improvement, this vision of regionalization has become more pronounced. The Middle East has become an important region for Russian policymakers as it has provided them with an opportunity to project its power and influence.

Therefore, this paper endeavours to trace out the fundamental elements of Russian statecraft in the Syrian conflict. Three key questions are addressed in this study: What are the dynamics of Russian statecraft in the Syrian conflict? Why the military intervention of Syria was deemed necessary for Russian statecraft towards the Middle East? How the current diplomatic efforts would enable Russia to assert itself regionally and globally? The major argument of this paper is that Russia is utilizing both military and diplomacy to achieve political ends in the Middle East as well as in the global political settings. Russia has faced international isolation after the war with Georgia and the annexation of Crimea. But Syria has brought Russia back in to the international decision-making as an important player.

### **Contextualization of Statecraft**

To understand the statecraft, it is pertinent to discuss the nature of statecraft as it appears to be elevated more so than the foreign policy or strategy of a state. Statecraft is the art of government in employing and consolidating all dimensions of a state's power, from domestic to international, military to diplomatic. Hence, foreign policy constitutes the articulation of a state's response to the external world with certain objectives vis-a-vis another state. While the strategy of a state is an effort

towards matching ends and means by prioritizing the objectives and instruments.<sup>1</sup>

The term 'statecraft' means the construction of strategies to secure the national interests of a state in an international arena, and to understand politics and policymaking by focusing on strategic choices and challenges of a government whose leadership and diplomats execute these strategies.<sup>2</sup> The art of statecraft includes a military strategy which mainly concerns the use or threat of military force, diplomacy that concerns with negotiations; economic statecraft in which the economic means are used to pursue foreign policy goals; and propaganda which concerns mainly with manipulating or deceiving with verbal or visual symbols.<sup>3</sup> Most of the foreign policies of a state consist of a combination of these strategies.

Diplomacy and military force, by their very nature, are considered as the means to the ends of statecraft and are the channels by which government press their agendas onto others.<sup>4</sup> Both these channels are equally inherent and useful tools of statecraft, in the art of managing government affairs skilfully. Diplomacy is about verbally communicating realities that support statecraft's policy missions abroad by conducting official affairs between states that may move nations; while military action is about physical communication of a government's wishes and involves the use of military resources either positively or negatively to address the national interests.<sup>5</sup> If diplomacy represents realities, military operations create them due to which statecraft is about managing these realities, combining means and ends to advance a country's interests.

## Dynamics of Russian Statecraft in the Middle East

Major elements of power do not equate Russia with the United States, China or European Union. Nonetheless, under the long rule of Vladimir Putin, Russia has been able to develop an outsized ability to exercise its influence abroad.<sup>6</sup> This implies that a state does not

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<sup>1</sup> US Marine Corps, *Strategy*, MCDP 1-1 (Washington D.C., Department of Navy, 1997), [www.marines.mil](http://www.marines.mil).

<sup>2</sup> Morton A. Kaplan, "An Introduction to the Strategy of Statecraft," *World Politics* 4, no. 4 (1952): 548-576.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Marc F. Blanchard and Norrin M. Ripsman, "A Political Theory of Economic Statecraft," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4 (2008), 372.

<sup>4</sup> Angelo M. Codevilla, "Tools of Statecraft: Diplomacy and War," *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, January 15, 2008, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2008/01/tools-of-statecraft-diplomacy-and-war/> ; Morton A. Kaplan, "An Introduction to the Strategy of Statecraft."

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Kathryn E. Stoner, *Russia Resurrected: Its Power and Purpose in a New Global Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 4-5.

necessarily have to be a great power that is at parity in all the realm but the willingness and ability of the leadership to effectively use its power resources and capacities in a skilful manner to bring a shift in the global balance of power. It is also argued that in order to reassert at the global level, Russia has focused more on its diplomatic and military power particularly in the areas where the West could not achieve the desired results, which has provided an opportunity for Russia to channelize its resources of power.

Vladimir Putin, after being named as the acting President of the Russian Federation in early 2000, announced that among his priorities, one is the restoration of Russia's statehood which he called 'gosudarstvennot'. He was referring to the sovereignty of Russia, a state in the aspect of domestic politics in which Russia would have the ability to act inherently as a coherent governing body.<sup>7</sup> This then became a key moment in the history of Russian statecraft especially after the end of the Cold War, when Russia practically ceased to function in some respects.

To understand Russian statecraft, a recent variant developed by Toby James known as 'neo-statecraft' can be used to analyse the country.<sup>8</sup> Neo-statecraft put its primary focus on the political leadership of the state and on the group of their closest advisers who are referred to as the 'court.' The main objective of the 'court' is maintaining and winning power rather than pursuing any ideological goals, they seek to achieve statecraft as rational and self-interested actors. This statecraft could be achieved by governing and managing a country's affairs, specifically the economy and by developing a winning electoral strategy. Through party management, they manage the parliamentary and constituency associations carefully through which they seek to shift a political game by introducing reforms that are favourable for them and achieve statecraft. As a result, when they successfully achieve statecraft internally, this then is asserted into their foreign policies respectively.<sup>9</sup>

After the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed the exposure of the United States' statecraft, its national security policies and processes, the dominance of its economic, military, and political machinery that made it a missionary approach in the international system. However, after the rise of other powers in the international arena, this approach seemed unsustainable in the shifting of balance of power and represented as one of the major fault-lines between the US and other major powers. As seen in the recent dilemma of international affairs, the unipolar order of

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<sup>7</sup> "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation," FAS, June 28, 2000, <https://nuke.fas.org/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Toby S. James, "Neo-Statecraft Theory, Historical Institutionalism and Institutional Change," *Government and Opposition* 51, no.1, (2016): 84-110.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

the US is being challenged by other rising powers such as China and Russia.

The statecraft achieved by Putin's administration in Russian Federation can be observed in its foreign policy goals and capabilities in the international arena. By using the statecrafts of diplomacy and military, Russia has demonstrated clearly that it is also an important player in geopolitics and international affairs. Its military campaign of 2015 in Syria has indicated that Russia can project its power effectively and independently in another region, reiterating that Moscow is still great power in the international system.<sup>10</sup>

Russia's military intervention in Syria's civil war was a surprise even for the closest observers of the country's foreign and security policy; as it was viewed that Moscow's military expeditions would not be carried out beyond its 'near abroad'.<sup>11</sup> With the West intervening on one side, Putin saw this intervention as a significant threat to its national security as for him the Western-backed 'regime change' has always been the source of instability in the international system. Another key factor in driving Russia's decision to intervene was the futility of a diplomatic resolution, which Moscow could not accept. The UN-led peace efforts gradually came to a standstill followed by the deadlocked conclusion on Syria in Geneva Conference on international peace in 2014.<sup>12</sup> However, Russia's diplomacy became active in the months between the conferences and the military intervention of 2015. Russia held many engagements on Syria, at the foreign minister and presidential levels, and organized two rounds of talks between the opposition and the Syrian government in Moscow in January 26-29 and April 6-9, 2015. The Western-backed Syrian National Coalition withdrew from the meeting and demanded a commitment for departure of Assad's regime.<sup>13</sup> In the end, none of these diplomatic efforts posed any impacts on the on-ground situations in Syria that continued to deteriorate.

By summer 2015, Moscow's senior decision-makers concluded that diplomacy has failed to deliver, and the non-military means were no longer effective. This perception changed the on-ground situations in Syria

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<sup>10</sup> Michael J. Mazarr and Michael Kofman, "Rediscovering Statecraft in a Changing Post-War Order," *Texas National Security Review* 1, no. 3 (May 2018): 101-117.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Charap, Elina Treyger and Edward Geist, *Understanding Russia's Intervention in Syria*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018)

<sup>12</sup> "Syria Peace Talks Break up as UN Envoy Fails to End Deadlock," *The Guardian*, February 15, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/15/syria-peace-talks-break-up-geneva>.

<sup>13</sup> Dominic Evans, "Syria Tells Western Foes to Stop Dreaming Assad will Go," *Reuters*, 27 November, 2013, <https://www.reuters.com/article/syria-crisis-geneva-idINDEE9AQ06920131127>.

and due to the futility of diplomacy, Russia intervened with its military statecraft and supported Assad's regime with increased military hardware, in addition to the diplomatic and economic backing, against the Western side.<sup>14</sup> With the announcement of the United States withdrawal from the Syrian war in 2019, Russia became successful in boosting its image as a new offshore balancer in the region and acquired vital opportunities on the ground in Syria. For Russia, the strategic game-plan is to construct a "polycentric" world order in which the United State will not be a hegemon and where non-Western states will have a role to play in the international arena.

### **Russian Military Statecraft in Syria**

The internal strife of Syria had become a conflict that drew the involvement of regional and extra-regional forces into the political landscape of the Middle East. Therefore, there had been a gradual increase in the number of belligerents with different objectives. Initially, the Baathist Syrian government led by Bashar Al Assad along with its allies tried to put down the opposition with its own security apparatus and military force. However, its military forces could not hold on to all of the country and the government was controlling only seventeen percent of the territory and was on the verge of defeat. To crush the rebellion and restore the government control, the armed struggle turned into a full-scale civil war for which the regime started looking for external support. Bashar Al Assad asked Russia, a long-time ally of Syria to help them in critical times.<sup>15</sup>

Russia had supported Assad's regime since 2011, when the civil war erupted in Syria and continued its military deliveries via the Black Sea to Latakia and Tartus.<sup>16</sup> However, indirect military support was turned into physical military intervention in 2015. At the first stage, Russia signed a secret military pact with Syria in August 2015, which was made public in January 2016. According to the pact, the military assistance could be terminated with one-year prior notice, and it allows Russian troops to have jurisdictional immunity. Moreover, it provides Russia access to Syria's Hmeimim airbase. This pact resembles the status of forces agreements (SOFAs), which usually are signed by the US with those

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<sup>14</sup> Samuel Charap, Elina Treyger, and Edward Geist, *Understanding Russia's Intervention in Syria*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> "Russia Joins War in Syria: Five Key Points," *BBC News*, October 1, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34416519>.

<sup>16</sup> Aron Lund, *Russia in the Middle East*, (Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 2019).

countries providing military bases.<sup>17</sup>

Full-scale military intervention in Syria was not the plan of Russian leadership because it always asserted to find a political solution to the crisis. The survival of Assad's regime was the major point of difference between the US and its western allies. The imminent downfall of Assad's regime struck Russian leadership as being fatal with long-lasting consequences. The regime collapse entailed substantial risks to the national security of Russia, for instance, the downfall of the regime would mean the victory of transnational terrorism which was perceived as a national security threat to Russia due to the spillover effect in the country. Moreover, it would strengthen the US agenda of 'regime change' in the Middle East, which could have undermined another objective of Russia that is to re-assert itself as a great power.<sup>18</sup> Hence, when the rebel forces conquered Idlib and moved towards Latakia, the Iranian Major General Qassem Soleimani visited Moscow and warned them of the fall of their joint ally as well as Russia's military asset at Tartus.<sup>19</sup> Russians were alarmed by the situation and convinced by Soleimani's assessment to protect its ally and the Russian facility at Tartus.

In September 2015, Russian overt military support was confirmed when Russia launched several airstrikes in Syria, informally known as 'Operation Vozmezdiye' (retribution).<sup>20</sup> After the Cold War, this is the largest and most significant deployment by Russia. Approximately 2000, Russian military personnel flew to the Hmeimim base in Syria. Subsequently, Russia deployed S-400, Su-25 Frogfoot ground-attack planes, new Su-34 full-back medium bombers, Su-24 Fencer fighter jets and several helicopters. Along with these, Russia further deployed strategic bombers held in Mozdok base in North Ossetia as well as in western Iran.<sup>21</sup>

According to the official statements of President Vladimir Putin, the primary objective of the Russian Federation was to fight against

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<sup>17</sup> Michael Birnbaum, "The Secret Pact between Russia and Syria that Gives Moscow Carte Blanche," *The Washington Post*, January 15, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/01/15/the-secret-pact-between-russia-and-syria-that-gives-moscow-carte-blanche/>.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Charap, Elina Treyger, and Edward Geist, *Understanding Russia's Intervention in Syria*.

<sup>19</sup> Laila Bassam and Tom Perry, "How Iranian General Plotted out Syrian Assault in Moscow," *Reuters*, October 6, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-soleimani-insigh-idUSKCN0S02BV20151006>.

<sup>20</sup> Brian Glyn Williams and Robert Souza, "Operation Retribution: Putin's Military Campaign in Syria 2015-16," *Middle East Policy Council* 23, no. 4 (2016).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Islamic State (IS). Under the slogan of fighting international terrorism, the Russian military campaign aimed to defeat the anti-regime elements including those backed by the West. Russian official claims were widely discrepant in terms of the mission's goals and targets.<sup>22</sup> As Russians had conflated ISIS with CIA backed armed groups, particularly Free Syrian Army, the conflict turned out to be a proxy war between Russia and the US. Initially, the Free Syrian Army had fought effectively against the Russian backed Syrian Army ground offensive with the help of US-supplied missiles. However, in subsequent campaigns, the Free Syrian Army could not stand on its feet as the US did not provide them further arms in the fear of a proxy war.<sup>23</sup>

Russian forces also held joint operations in western Syria, Hama and Homs along with Iran and Hezbollah. During this ground assault, Russia fired 26 new Caliber cruise missiles at rebel targets in Aleppo, Idlib and Raqqa.<sup>24</sup> This signified that Russia was also taking Syria as a testing space for its new state of the art military technology. By October 2015, the regime had regained lost territory and began to stabilize with the help of Russia, Iran and Hezbollah. In November 2015, the alleged Russian Su-24 was shot down by the Turkish air defense due to the violation of air space.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the Russian forces responded fiercely and attacked Turkish backed groups in Syria; it further blockaded the Turkish economy and threatened to support PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), which Turkey perceived as a national security threat.<sup>26</sup> However, the relations between the two countries improved dramatically when the Turkish President offered an apology.<sup>27</sup> Later, Russia and Turkey held joint operations in Syria.<sup>28</sup>

Although Russia and its allies were gaining ground, it agreed with

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<sup>22</sup> Maksymilian Czuperski, et.al., "Distract, Deceive, Destroy: Putin at War in Syria," *Atlantic Council Report*, April 2016, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Distract-Deceive-Destroy.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Brinbaum, "The Secret Pact between Russia and Syria."

<sup>24</sup> Williams and Souza, "Operation Retribution: Putin's Military Campaign in Syria 2015-16."

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Frida Berg, "Turkey's Security and Syrian Civil War," (Master's Thesis, Linnaeus University Sweden, 2020): 35.

<sup>27</sup> Andrew Roth and Erin Cunningham, "Turkish President Apologizes for Drowning of Russian Warplane Last Year," *The Washington Post*, June 27, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> "Joint Turkish-Russian Patrols to Begin on March 15-Latest Updates" *TRT World*, March 7, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkey-apologizes-for-shooting-down-russian-warplane-last-year/2016/06/27/\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkey-apologizes-for-shooting-down-russian-warplane-last-year/2016/06/27/_story.html).

the US to a cease-fire in February 2016.<sup>29</sup> However, this proved to be short-lived due to the continued use of force by President Bashar al Assad in Aleppo. Another deal was signed between the two countries to ban President Assad's air force in parts of Syria and to be replaced by joint US-Russian aerial operations.<sup>30</sup> But the deal collapsed again due to the continued use of force by the loyalists to the regime. By December 2016, the Syrian Army had retaken Aleppo from the rebels; this was termed as the biggest victory of Assad's regime since 2011.<sup>31</sup> This victory turned the tide in Russia's favor encompassing regional and international politics.

In January 2017, Russia initiated the first round of peace talks in Astana. But despite the Astana peace process, fighting continued in several parts of the country. Between May 2017 and July 2018, President Assad's forces captured most of the rebel areas one by one and managed to seize those areas of eastern Syria, which were held by the IS (Islamic State group). Meanwhile, Russia supported Syrian operations with airpower, it also made sure to prevent clashes with Israel, Jordan, the US and Turkey through negotiations.<sup>32</sup> In December 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared victory against the IS.<sup>33</sup>

The key achievements in 2018 were the decline of IS with the fall of Raqqa, which was the heart of the IS proclaimed caliphate and the territorial gains of President Bashar Al Assad. Russian air campaign had enabled the Syrian government to retake Homs, Damascus, Eastern Ghouta and Deraa.<sup>34</sup> As of 2019, out of 16 provincial capitals, 13 were under the Syrian government including all major cities. Russian military support remained the backbone of the Syrian regime in its fight against

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<sup>29</sup> "Syrian Conflict: US-Russia Brokered Truce to Start at Weekend," *BBC News*, February 22, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35634695>.

<sup>30</sup> Andrew S. Weiss and Nicole NG, "Collision Avoidance: The Lessons of U.S. and Russian Operations in Syria," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Paper*, March 20, 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/03/20/collision-avoidance-lessons-of-u.s.-and-russian-operations-in-syria-pub-78571>.

<sup>31</sup> "Aleppo Battle: Syrian City Back under Government Control," *BBC News*, December 22, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38408548>.

<sup>32</sup> Sam Heller, "Aleppo's Bitter Lessons," *The Century Foundation*, January 27, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Phil Stewart, "U.S. Wary of Putin's Declaration of Military Victory in Syria," *Reuters*, December 12, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-usa-russia-idUSKBN1E62L7>.

<sup>34</sup> Simon Tisdall, "Putin Holds Winning Cards as Syrian War Nears Idlib Showdown," *The Guardian*, July 21, 2018.

adversaries.<sup>35</sup> In July 2020, Russia signed an agreement with Syrian authorities, giving it additional land and coastal waters to expand its military airbase at Hmeimim.<sup>36</sup>

Russian strategy mainly relied on firepower with Syrian intelligence to crush the opposition. To deal with the belligerents, Russia had been successful to engage them with an effective strategy. The belligerents particularly Israel and Turkey were told not to create hindrances for Russian operations in Syria. Israel never attacked Russian sites but only targeted Iran's site as it wanted to avoid a confrontation with Russian Federation. Russia on the other hand avoided direct clashes by setting up a coordination mechanism in September 2015.<sup>37</sup> Turkey's major concern was to forestall the Kurdish expansion of YPG (Kurdish People's Protection Units). Although, Turkey and Russia were on the opposite sides of the conflict but garnering Turkey's support for the Russian side was the turning point in the Syrian war as it marginalized the Russian opposition. With the United States, Russia very tactfully utilized the narrative of fighting international terrorism and ensured cooperation in this regard.<sup>38</sup>

Russia prioritized its operations in western Syria against Syrian opposition forces. Meanwhile, Turkey was fighting against the Kurdish enclave of Afrin, which served as a template for further cooperation between Russia and Turkey. The military pressure of Russia and Turkey pushed Kurdish forces out of the area. This granted Turkey a foothold near its Southern border and helped Russia to prevent the US from establishing a military presence in Western Syria. Moreover, both countries made flexible arrangements for temporary ceasefires, which led them to hold joint patrolling in Idlib.<sup>39</sup> More recently on August 2021, talks between Russia's Special Envoy, Alexander Lavrentiev and Turkish delegation were held in Ankara in which both sides discussed the ceasefire in Idlib and

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<sup>35</sup> Aron Lund, "Russia in the Middle East" The Swedish Institute of International Affairs Report 2, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/21/syria-idlib-putin-assad-winners-iran>.

<sup>36</sup> "Syria Agrees to let Russia Expand Hmeimim Air Base," *Reuters*, August 19, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-russia-syria-airbase-idUKKCN25F2BH>.

<sup>37</sup> Martin Russell, "Russia in the Middle East: From Sidelines to Centre Stage," Brussels, *European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS)*, November 21, 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Gustav Gressel, "Managed Chaos: Russia's Deal with Turkey on Northern Syria," *European Council on Foreign Relations*, November 3, 2019, [https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_managed\\_chaos\\_russias\\_deal\\_with\\_turkey\\_on\\_northern\\_syria/](https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_managed_chaos_russias_deal_with_turkey_on_northern_syria/).

showed a resolve to prevent the provocative attacks in the region.<sup>40</sup>

In the wake of the change in the US leadership, there have been strained relations between the Russian Federation and the US. Syria is also a key area of tension between the two countries as Russian Embassy has criticized presence of the US troops in Syria on August 2021.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, US is in alliance with Israel and more recently, Russia also seems to change its position on Syria vis-à-vis Israel. There are speculations about Russia upgrading the Syrian air defense against Israeli strikes. This situation could pose a challenge to the Russian interest in the Middle East.

## Russia's Hybrid Warfare

Another aspect of Russian military statecraft is the usage of hybrid warfare to reach important ends with the minimal use of military force and to shape the perception of the world. There is a clear discrepancy in Russia's stated goal, which is to defeat terrorists, primarily the IS. The inferred Russian goals in Syria to re-establishing its influence in the Middle East, restoration of its international image breaking out of the US-imposed political isolation, and testing new weapons and gaining combat experience for its forces.<sup>42</sup>

Russia combined conventional air assets deployed in a conventional role, with an overarching information campaign. Contrary to the stated goal of defeating the IS, Russia's air campaign targeted the moderate rebel fighters and civilian opposition. Russia perceived the moderate rebel fighters would not be targeted by the US because they posed risks to the Syrian regime which is in the interest of the US. Therefore, Russia made a smart move and concentrated its efforts on eliminating moderate elements while also claiming in the media to attack the IS. This is how the US would engage against the IS anyway. Hence, Russia was able to preserve its air assets by employing fewer resources as compared to the US.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> "Turkey's Kalin, Russia's Syria Envoy Lavrentiev Discuss Syria," *Daily Sabah*, August 3, 2021, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkeys-kalin-russias-syria-envoy-lavrentiev-discuss-syria>.

<sup>41</sup> Brendan Cole, "Russia says American Forces not in Syria Legally as US Admits Error on UN Mandate Claim," *Newsweek*, August 10, 2021, <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-syria-operation-inherent-resolve-un-charter-law-error-security-council-embassy-dc-1617866>.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Kofman and Matthew Rojansky, "What Kind of Victory for Russia in Syria?" *Military Review*, (January 28, 2018): 384.

<sup>43</sup> Anthony N. Celso, "Superpower Hybrid Warfare in Syria," *MCU Journal* 9, no. 2 (2018):1108-109.

In addition to the air campaign, Russia employed an information campaign, which was focused on its achievements against the terror networks and the IS.<sup>44</sup> This helped Russia to transform its image and influence in the international media. Moreover, the hybrid approach gave Russia an appropriate room to frame the US actions and policies in Syria as comparably ineffective. Due to this enhanced image, President Putin started interacting with the heads of the state of various regional powers, such as Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Russia also made strategic gains, as its arms sale also boosted in the region.<sup>45</sup>

### **Private Military Companies of Russia**

Private Military Contractors (PMC) have been an important tool of Russian policy since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup> This model has been growing and expanding under Vladimir Putin and a plausible deniability is the major reason for its employment. These PMCs do not signify their links with the leadership or the government. Hence, this uncertain association provides Russia leverage in its military statecraft to stall the adversary's response, while gaining short term strategic gains.

Slavonic Corps Limited was allegedly the first PMC employed in Syria to provide military support to Bashar Al Assad, before the direct military intervention of Russia.<sup>47</sup> However, Slavonic Corps could not achieve significant results in Syria. Subsequently, the Wagner Group was deployed in Syria as an elusive entity. Wagner Group is based in Russia but registered in Argentina.<sup>48</sup> Because, according to article 359 of the Russian Criminal code, PMCs are illegal. However, Vladimir Putin admitted to their activity in Syria. But he asserted that the PMCs do not represent the state and had been working on oil exploration in their private capacity.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, the soldiers of the Wagner Group have no contract or association with the Russian Defense Ministry but the founder of Wagner

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<sup>44</sup> Charap, Tryger, and Geist, *Understanding Russia's Intervention*, 8-9.

<sup>45</sup> Becca Wasser, *The Limits of Russian Strategy in the Middle East*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2019).

<sup>46</sup> Theodore Karasik, "Russia in the Middle East: Implications and Policy Recommendations," The Jamestown Foundation Report, November 20, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Sergey Sukhankin, "Russian PMCs in the Syrian Civil War: From Slavonic Corps to Wagner Group and Beyond," (Washington D.C., The James Town Foundation, 2019).

<sup>48</sup> Kimberly Marten, "Russia's Use of Semi-state Security Forces: The Case of Wagner Group" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 35, no. 3 (2019): 12, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/1060586X.2019.1591142?scroll=top&needAccess=true>.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

PMC, Yevgeniy Prigozhin has been a close associate of Vladimir Putin.<sup>50</sup> The official Russian narratives have never highlighted the losses or achievements of the Wagner soldiers because they are off the books as in the case of retaking the city of Palmyra. The victorious celebration only lauded the Russian Army and the participation of Russian Special Forces.<sup>51</sup> The use of PMCs to cover the actual number of casualties as to demonstrate fewer casualties of the Russian Forces in the Russian hybrid warfare, presents to the world Russia's successful combat operations.

## Russia's Diplomatic Statecraft in Syria

Russian engagement in Syria is comprised of complex and multifaceted elements of statecraft. Russia's use of military instruments has been closely connected to diplomatic measures. This connected feature of Russian policy has shaped the trajectory of the war. Consequently, Russia was successful in strengthening Assad's military position, shaping international negotiations as well as gaining recognition as a diplomatic arbiter. Moreover, its veto rights in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) have further strengthened its position to block actions of other states even if Russia is isolated in its stance. To achieve this, Russia has vetoed sixteen resolutions on Syria since 2011 and most of the time these vetoes were backed by China.<sup>52</sup>

Russia attempted to create a political mechanism in which it could play a lead role, and which would pave the way to end the war on Asaad's terms. Moscow persuaded the US to co-initiate the US-led Syrian peace process in 2012 and to co-guarantee subsequent ceasefires. The coordination between Russia and the US has been beneficial for President Assad's regime because both the US and Russia would never want an escalation that could bring both states into direct confrontation.<sup>53</sup> This in turn fulfils Russian and Syrian objectives of avoidance of collision with the US. The major aims of Russia's diplomatic endeavour in the Syrian peace process were to further the pro-regime progress in the battleground and attain of its strategic objectives in the conflict. Russian diplomatic

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<sup>50</sup> Owen Matthews, "Putin's Secret Armies Waged War in Syria: Where Will They Fight Next?" *Newsweek*, January 17, 2018, <https://www.newsweek.com/2018/01/26/putin-secret-army-waged-war-syria-782762.html>.

<sup>51</sup> Luke Harding, "Palmyra Hosts Russian Concert after Recapture by Syrian Forces," *The Guardian*, May 5, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/05/palmyra-amphitheatre-hosts-russian-concert-after-recapture-by-syrian-forces>.

<sup>52</sup> Witold Rodkiewicz, "Russia's Middle Eastern Policy: Regional Ambitions Global Objectives," *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)* 71, December 2017.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

statecraft in complementing its military campaign can be analysed in two stages; the Geneva Process of 2016 and the Astana Process of 2017.<sup>54</sup>

## **Geneva Process**

Geneva Process began in 2012, which involved representatives from over a dozen countries including Russia and the US. Countries agreed on a roadmap for peace known as Geneva Communiqué, laying out the political transition in Syria.<sup>55</sup> Despite the regular diplomatic engagement, the Geneva Process failed to make any progress due to the differences between Russia and the Syrian opposition, which wanted President Assad to step down. However, Russia managed to engage with the US to co-initiated the ceasefire proposed by the International Syria Support Group in November 2015. Russia and the US also coordinated to pass the UNSCR 2254, which prescribed a ceasefire, constitutional reforms and election under the UN monitoring.<sup>56</sup>

Kremlin sought to acquire the legitimacy of its actions pertaining to diplomatic initiatives as well as to leverage its military intervention. It also sought to engage the United States in accepting and recognizing Russia as the main political player in Syria. Moreover, the participation of the US in such diplomatic efforts has given Russia an equal footing in international decision-making. This diplomatic manoeuvring of Russia has been successful to get away from the international isolation imposed after the Crimean annexation. However, the ceasefire deals rapidly collapsed due to differences in the objectives of Russia and the United States. Russia and the Syrian regime continued their military campaign without any significant repercussions but the US lost its leverage by ending its support to the Syrian opposition.<sup>57</sup> These coordinated diplomatic efforts weakened the credibility of the US in the eyes of its allies. Meanwhile, in the wake of the collapse of the US-Russian ceasefire agreement in 2016, Moscow started talks with regional countries such as Iran and Turkey to establish a new international forum.

After nine months pause, due to the disagreement on the agenda and travel restrictions in the wake of Covid-19, the UN-led Syrian constitution talks started yet again. The fundamental objective of the negotiations has been to keep the momentum going towards a political solution to the civil war, which has lasted for nine years now. However, the viability of the Geneva talks is questioned to the disagreement of the participants involved in the talks, particularly Syrian opposition forces and

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>55</sup> James Dobins et. al., *A Peace Plan for Syria IV*, (Santa Monica, CA: 2017).

<sup>56</sup> Ingrid Habets, "Obstacles to a Syrian Peace: the Interference of Interests," *European View* 15, (June 2016):77-85.

<sup>57</sup> Rodkiewicz, "Russia's Middle Eastern Policy," 10.

the Syrian regime. Russia agreed to the UN calls for the resumption of talks and always stressed the importance of resuming the political process, but it is extremely unlikely that talks would lead to any agreement regarding the constitutional reforms.

## Astana Process

Following the collapse of the joint US-Russia ceasefire agreement in September 2016, Russia resorted to a regional concert of powers. It obtained new partners, Turkey and Iran to create a new international forum. Hence, the trilateral meeting of Turkey, Iran and Russia was held in Astana, Kazakhstan in January 2017. The sides agreed to create a monitoring group to supervise the implementation of the UNSCR 2254.<sup>58</sup> In May 2017, the trio reached an agreement to create four de-escalation zones in western Syria. These zones were Idlib province neighbouring Turkey, the Homs province, the Eastern Ghouta region, which is situated in the east of Damascus and the areas near Jordan and Israel.<sup>59</sup>

Astana Process made only limited progress in brokering an agreement between opposition forces and the Assad regime. However, it was beneficial for Russia, as Moscow's diplomatic efforts were meant to advance its military objectives rather than achieving peace. Russia's pivotal role in the Astana process and exclusion of the United States from regional concert allowed creating an image for itself as an actor seeking to end the bloodshed. In the wake of the hostilities between Turkish and Syrian forces, diplomatic efforts over Idlib broke down in February 2020.<sup>60</sup> Subsequently, in March 2020 both countries de-escalated the situation and reached a ceasefire deal and an agreement for joint patrolling along the M4 highway.<sup>61</sup> Russia represented itself as a supporter and implementer of the ceasefires and de-escalation zone, but it has been an active combatant on the battlefield.

## Conclusion

Russian diplomatic statecraft went hand-in-hand with its military strategy. Both focused on elevating Moscow's influence through the preservation of the fall of Assad's regime, entrench its position in the region and reducing the US influence. To achieve these objectives, the anti-

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<sup>58</sup> "Joint Statement by Iran, Russia and Turkey on the International Meeting on Syria in the Astana Format," Relief Web, April 27, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int>.

<sup>59</sup> Ekaterina Stepanova, "Russia's Syria Policy: The Hard Path of Military Disengagement," *PONARS Eurasia*, February 1, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Kofman and Rojansky, *What Kind of Victory for Russia*, 384.

<sup>61</sup> "Russia Turkey Begin Joint Patrols along Syria's M4 Highway," *Al-Jazeera*, March 12, 2020, <https://www-fastly.aljazeera.com/topics/events/idlib-battle-syria.html>.

regime opposition was marginalized both militarily and diplomatically. Moreover, Russia has been able to establish close ties with all actors in the region and has made itself a credible partner to those seeking to diversify their foreign policy. Russia has acted upon the structural changes in regional and global politics; hence it has carefully employed diplomatic and military tools to complement each other as well as to enhance Russian position as a global actor. Like any other great power, it is cautious in its assessment of material constraints and opportunities. Syria is viewed as an important ally in the Middle East that must be retained for geopolitical advantage and to uphold its status as a global power.

Russia has understood that political settlement was necessary to be utilized along with the military ones. Hence, military actions were closely coordinated to its diplomatic activities to achieve results. Ground operations were avoided and given to the local allies and provided them with air support through air defense, intelligence, military advice, and technical assistance. Russia also kept the communication channels open to all the parties and successfully engaged them when and where needed. Russia employed its information warfare very intelligently to discredit its adversaries. Russia's authoritarian style of decision making was another leverage to react rapidly to the opportunities and blend military and political diplomacy in a unified manner.

Russian military campaign has shown that Russia's way of war has been evolving to adapt to new realities. However, fundamental strategic interests largely remain the same. Russia's diplomatic activities were successful in advancing its core strategic aims of restoring Assad's regime. However, there are certain challenges Russia has been facing that are yet to be tackled, which are Israeli strikes, military footprints of Turkey and the US and Russia's lack of control over the decision making of the Syrian regime backed by Iran and Hezbollah.

Although Russia has become an active military and diplomatic actor in the Middle Eastern region, but it is still far from being able to design a regional order on its own. Russia would have serious challenges in the region due to the US-Israeli enduring cooperation and a change in the US administration. There is a possibility of conflict between the US and Russia with heightened tensions at the global level. In this situation, Russia's regional role could turn into a strategic challenge for the US and Israel, which would have serious repercussions to the Russian objectives in the Middle East. However, as of 2021, Russia has been able to promote its strategic interests in the region with unflinching support to the Assad regime, which has secured 4<sup>th</sup> presidential term till 2028. Moreover, Russia has built a consensus partnership with China and Iran to capitalize on the US waning influence in the Middle East.

## ROLE OF INDIAN MEDIA IN FOMENTING WAR HYSTERIA BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF URI INCIDENT

Ghulam Mujaddid\* & Anil Sarfraz\*\*

### Abstract

*This study highlights the peril of Indian media's insinuation of war with Pakistan in the aftermath of Uri incident of September 18, 2016. Uri was a violent expression of Kashmiri right of self-determination; but Indian media became a source of arousing anti-Pakistan hysteria for Indian public. The war frenzy created by the media, pressured Indian decision makers into making the claim of carrying out surgical strikes across the Line of Control (LoC). In this way, Indian media became a source of fomenting war between the two nuclear armed states. The study uses Indian sources to evidence the jingoistic frenzy of the Indian TV news channels. Importance of having responsible media in nuclear armed states has been underscored by Indian media's dangerous handling of Uri crisis. This study raises awareness about the responsibility of media in sustaining peace between the nuclear rivals, particularly during crisis situations.*

**Keywords:** *Indian Media, War Hysteria, Kashmir Conflict, Uri Incident, Surgical Strikes*

### Introduction

Pakistan and India have shared increasingly strained and often violent relations since their independence in 1947. The peace between them has often been threatened because of the contentious issue of Kashmir; and there have been several wars and military standoffs between them over Kashmir. Mutual distrust and hostility has also marred the peace negotiations and dialogue. The prevailing relationship between India and Pakistan can be judged by the observation that "the neighbours have never been on the same page on the most critical issues, be it the

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Kashmir conflict, terrorism, nuclear capability race, or military clashes. Suspicion and untrustworthiness are constant.”<sup>1</sup> Mutual aversion to each other has seeped deeply in their state and society structures and is noticeable in their media systems as well. As a result, media in both countries, especially in India, has become overly blatant and biased particularly during the crisis situations. Indian media coverage of crises is often tainted by jingoism rather than prudence. Such media coverage can lead to unintended consequences during the crises between the nuclear states. There is little doubt that media has become a powerful tool for inciting both positive and negative responses from the audience and the local media coverage is increasingly shaping the conflict dynamics.<sup>2</sup> The American media, for instance, pressured the then administration to take military action to neutralize the alleged Iraqi capability of “weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>3</sup> Due to overwhelming reach of the media houses and journalists favouring attack on Iraq, nearly 75 per cent Americans supported the invasion of Iraq in 2003.<sup>4</sup> In the same vein, journalists and media channels in India have become influential enough to bolster intense nationalistic feelings against Pakistan to pressure their political leaders to choose military responses to restore “national prestige.”<sup>5</sup>

It was in the morning of September 18, 2016 that four armed militants stormed a military unit in Uri, a town located in the Indian occupied Kashmir. Eighteen Indian soldiers were fatally injured in the attack that was termed as the “deadliest attack on security forces in Kashmir in two decades.” Militant organization “Jaish-e-Mohammed,” which had alleged links with Pakistan, was quickly blamed by the Indian authorities to have carried out the attack. This was followed by an incessant media campaign against Pakistan.<sup>6</sup> This type of negative role of Indian media in Kashmir related conflict and politics became a norm in the recent years. This time the Indian TV news channels were poised for imminent war with Pakistan. The Indian media became the prime mover in shaping the conflict after the Uri incident. A concerted anti-Pakistan

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<sup>1</sup> Salman Ali, “South Asian Politics: Dilemma of Trust and Mistrust,” *South Asian Voices*, September 18, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Puddephatt, *Voices of War: Conflict and the Role of the Media* (Copenhagen: International Media Support, 2006), 3-8.

<sup>3</sup> Steve Rendall and Tara Broughel, “Amplifying Officials, Squelching Dissent,” in *FAIR*, May 1, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> M. Hirsh, A. H Awan and J.K. Sarmah, “India and Pakistan: Outlining a Path towards Peace,” *Policy Perspectives* 15, no. 1 (2018): 21-42.

<sup>6</sup> Ankit Panda, “Gurdaspur, Pathankot, and Now Uri: What Are India's Options?” *The Diplomat*, September 19, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/gurdaspur-pathankot-and-now-uri-what-are-indias-options/>.

campaign was unleashed which stoked feelings of rage and hatred against Pakistan, compelling the Indian authorities to claim surgical strikes across the Line of Control (LoC). Given the fact that both India and Pakistan are nuclear armed states and any military confrontation between the two can escalate into the nuclear realm, it is crucial to investigate how Indian media can shape public opinion in India to clamour for war with Pakistan.<sup>7</sup>

The Indian media has significantly influenced strategic relations between India and Pakistan over the past two decades. In the aftermath of Uri attack, in particular, it manipulated facts about the incident to incite war between the two nuclear armed states. Indian television news channels created intense public frenzy which compelled the political leadership to take the decision of carrying out the so-called surgical strikes across the LoC. Pakistan denied the Indian claim of surgical strikes.<sup>8</sup> This dampened the effects of unwise Indian adventurism; otherwise, the situation could have led to a serious nuclear crisis between the two states.

## Media in Politics and Conflict

Media is accorded the status of being “the fourth pillar of the state” because of its importance in politics and policy. Foreign policy is one of the key policies affected by media’s influence. The role of media becomes acutely important when a country tries to resolve important geopolitical issues and crises with neighbouring states.<sup>9</sup> In case of Pakistan and India, the respective national media have often stoked sentiments in overly nationalist manner. Some scholars have highlighted the role of media in shaping public opinion, yet the role of media in fueling conflict between nuclear India and Pakistan needs more scholarly attention. The influence of media on geostrategic choices of the major powers can be appreciated during the negotiations on “Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty” between United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1981-1987. The American media has taken these negotiations in positive spirit and facilitated in concluding the INF Treaty.<sup>10</sup> During these negotiations, the media has been able to set, reflect and build an agenda which affirmed

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<sup>7</sup> Karthika Sasikumar, “India-Pakistan Crises under the Nuclear Shadow: The Role of Reassurance,” *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 2, no. 1 (2019): 151-169.

<sup>8</sup> Syed Sammer Abbas, “Two guides from Muzaffarabad Facilitated Uri Attackers, India tells Pakistan,” *Dawn*, September 27, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Manzoor, R., Maken, A. M., Syed, S. A., & Ahmed, V., “Trading with India: Some Current Impediments for Pakistan,” *Journal of International Trade Law and Policy* 18, no. 1(2019): 39-55.

<sup>10</sup> Marc A. Genest *Negotiating in the Public Eye : the Impact of the Press on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Negotiations* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 15-17, 62-78.

that the linkage between reporting, political decision making, and peoples' behavior is not constant but changing.<sup>11</sup> The way an issue is framed and presented impacts how the state responds and the public behaves. There is an important interrelationship between society and the level of ongoing communication. Nature of a society is often determined by the level of communication. In much the same way, the communication media tends to determine the nature of political system.<sup>12</sup>

The media causes political prejudices and advocates interest politics at the expense of impartiality.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes, it tries to set the national agenda to steer the sequence of actions, and not just inform the people about what is happening. The Indo-Pakistan conflict could be visualized through the framework of "political competition model."<sup>14</sup> The essence of this framework is that the role of media in politics could be understood by viewing the media competition as part of a bigger and more intense competition between the contenders for political control. The contours of media's "political competition model" became apparent shortly after Indo-Pak independence, when media in both countries started to play an important role in increasing tensions between them. Historically, the media has played a paranoid role and infested the strategic dynamics between the two countries with mutual suspicion and distrust. Due to its mammoth size, commercial self-interest, and proclivity to ride on the waves of Hindu nationalism, the role of Indian media has become more assertive, as compared to that of Pakistani media. The importance of media in conveying information, forming opinions, setting trends, and shaping social behavior in case of the two South Asian neighbours cannot be overstated.<sup>15</sup>

Role of media has increased in affecting the local and international opinions in today's interconnected world, owing to its 24/7 coverage of the events around the globe. This spectacle has enabled the media experts to be more effective in swaying the higher echelons of the government decision makers. Such impact of media on public and foreign policy can be appreciated with particular allusion to the "CNN effect." The new technologies have constricted the space for composed considerations on

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Colin Seymour Ure, *The Political Impact of the Mass Media* (London: Constable and Co., 1974), 9-14.

<sup>13</sup> Karthika Sasikumar, "India-Pakistan Crises under the Nuclear Shadow: The Role of Reassurance," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 2, no.1 (2020): 151-169.

<sup>14</sup> Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-12, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Akram, "Role of Media in Resumption of Peace Talks between Pakistan and India," *ISSRA Papers* 2 no. 2 (2010): 84-102.

matters of public policy; and the policy makers are compelled to respond to media pressure without being fully prepared. The “CNN effect” encapsulates that the citizens and the political leaders could be pressured by the communication networks to respond to national and international happenings within a short time.<sup>16</sup> On the whole, the media has started playing a salient role in shaping the political reality, in determining problems and setting the agenda of the political campaigns.<sup>17</sup> Media has also become more pervasive in conflicts based on “institutionalized war economies,” where the vested interest of media houses and the corporates collude to cause conflict continuation. In such cases “power of the media coverage (and the concern it aroused in public opinion) proved stronger than the will of governments.”<sup>18</sup> In case of India, media is tending to be “war crazy” as well and many Indian journalists are becoming increasingly eager to spread unconfirmed, conflicting and notional news which suites the official propaganda.<sup>19</sup> Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi has also recognized the fact of long-time prevalence of war-mongering in the Indian media.<sup>20</sup> According to a seminal study of Stimson Center, Indian media has attained the prowess to influence political decision making, especially during a crisis with Pakistan. “The media, news-consuming public, and policymaking community form a self-referential cycle in which each feeds and reaffirms the other’s perception of reality regarding India-Pakistan crises.”<sup>21</sup> The study concludes that during the Modi government, the pressurizing capacity of the media to influence official decision-making has been enhanced.

The preceding discussion shows that the role of the media has become the focus of scholarly attention around the world in exacerbating as well as managing a political conflict within and between the states. The media has become a strong mediator between the people and the governments. In this position, media appreciably influences the political

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<sup>16</sup> Piers Robinson, “The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?” *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 301-309.

<sup>17</sup> Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1974): 176-187.

<sup>18</sup> Puddephatt, “Voices of War,” 6-7.

<sup>19</sup> Vaishnavi Chandrashekhar, “India’s Media is War-Crazy,” *Foreign Policy*, April 17, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/01/indias-media-is-war-crazy/>.

<sup>20</sup> Scroll Staff, “India-Pakistan Tension: Nobel Prize Winner Kailash Satyarthi Warns of ‘War-Mongering’ by Journalists,” *Scroll.in*, March 12, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Ruhee Neog, “Self-referencing the News: Media, Policymaking, and Public Opinion in India-Pakistan Crises,” in Sameer Lalwani and Hannah Haegel and (eds.), *Investigating Crises: South Asia’s Lessons, Evolving Dynamics, and Trajectories* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 2018):115-121, 125.

decision making in democracies.<sup>22</sup> Its capability to form a “self-referential cycle” along with public and government is a critical phenomenon which could lead to a self-feeding catastrophe. There is also the evidence in scholarly research that Indian media is exacerbating the conflict for its commercial self-interest.<sup>23</sup> The media, especially the television news channels, play an important role in transforming the relations between political adversaries at national and international level. Such an influence becomes crucially significant when the media becomes an agent of war and conflict- as it did in case of India after the Uri incident.

## Media in Perspective

Theoretical perspectives on media refer to complex socio-political-philosophical principles that organize ideas about the relationship between the media and society. The perspective of symbolic interaction is used in the context of understanding individual’s behaviour in society.<sup>24</sup> Examining communication and media impact on individuals and society through this perspective is useful. Communication is the key to exchange of meanings between individuals; and this exchange is executed through symbols and language. Meanings and symbols take shape when they are interpreted by others and the society. Symbolic interaction perspective makes it easier to trace human behaviour to a particular pattern or system of thought. Constructivism is an extension of the symbolic interaction perspective which proposes that “reality is what people construct cognitively to be it.”<sup>25</sup> Social constructs are developed by interactions with others and those that last over time have meanings that are widely accepted by the majority in society.

Vietnam War is thought to be the breakthrough in modern history of the media. Television and the press achieved more invasive role owing to the technology which facilitated recording of terrifying images and showing them to people at home.<sup>26</sup> Since then, television has increasingly focused on public perception building and consent construction. It is now the key tool for influencing the masses and the governments. It has

<sup>22</sup> Robinson, “The CNN Effect.”

<sup>23</sup> Praful Bidwai, “The Growing Crisis of Credibility of the Indian Media,” The Transnational Institute (TNI), April 28, 2011, <https://www.tni.org/es/node/11017>.

<sup>24</sup> Alver Fusun and Sebnem Caglar, “The Impact of Symbolic Interactionism on Research Studies about Communication Science,” *International Journal of Arts & Sciences* 8, no.7 (2015): 479–484.

<sup>25</sup> John Baylis, *The Globalization of World Politics* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), 237.

<sup>26</sup> Eytan Gilboa, “Mass Communication and Diplomacy: A Theoretical Framework,” *Communication Theory* 10, no. 3 (August 2000): 275- 309.

become a cliché that television is “an independent force in international affairs.”<sup>27</sup> The first Iraq war was also the first media war in real time because the fighting reached homes, markets, and salons with all the brutal details in real time. The latest example of media influence on the political system is the innovative role of online social media platforms and the fast-paced changes they have brought in countries like Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen during the “Arab Spring.” Although the forms and types of media have vastly changed today, the basic and broad traditions of thought about media and its role in fanning or containing conflict are largely intact. In case of India, the mainstream television news channels intentionally buildup a melodramatic conversation during a national crisis. As per symbolic interaction and constructivist approaches, this buildup gets linked with the emotions and approval of the Indian public. This linkage is evident by the highest ever ratings of the jingoistic programs of the mainstream English and vernacular TV news networks during Uri crisis.<sup>28</sup>

This research employs exploratory research technique and uses multiple sources for data collection, including reports, studies, books, and journal articles. A noteworthy aspect of the employed research technique is the reliance on accounts of Indian scholars and social activists on the role of Indian media during Indo-Pak crises in general, and Uri incident in particular. The reporting pattern of the termed ‘balanced’ national newspaper *The India Today*, *The Indian Express* and prime time shows of the news channels like *NDTV*, *Zee TV*, *News X*, *Aaj Tak* and *Times Now* have been explored as the leading shapers of the public opinion and war mongering during Uri crisis.

### **Uri Incident and Media’s War Mongering**

The year 2016 was a year with continued tensions in Indian Occupied Kashmir. There were several critical gatherings of mobs and protesters that often led to brutal violence of the security forces against the dissenters. The agitation was further fueled when the Indian forces killed Burhan Wani of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) on July 8, 2016.<sup>29</sup> Wani was a prominent local Kashmiri activist who was struggling against cruelty of the Indian Army. As a consequence of his death, mobs and protests

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Sujit Kumar Mohanty and Murali Basa, “Media Framing of the 2016 Surgical Strike,” Paper Presented in International Seminar on Media and Politics, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar on 6-7 December, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> “Burhan Wani’s Death and a Year of Living Dangerously,” *The Hindu*, July 8, 2017, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article19240485.ece>.

increased and resulted in a large number of casualties.<sup>30</sup> In July and August 2016, around 85 Kashmiris were killed and 11000 were injured. In August 2016, India and Pakistan used their Independence Day functions to feed strains in their relations. In Pakistan, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif devoted the day to the “opportunity of Kashmir,” while the India Prime Minister Narendra Modi criticized “Pakistan-supported terrorism” in India.<sup>31</sup> In this backdrop, the Uri attack caused a spike in the ongoing political and diplomatic strains between the two neighbouring countries. Indian Home Minister of that time, Rajnath Singh, blamed Pakistan for giving “direct help to terrorism and terrorist gatherings.”<sup>32</sup> The tense situation in which the Indian leadership had put itself by portraying to be tough with Pakistan was an important factor in its succumbing to the public pressure.

The week of the Uri attack was also a testing time for the Prime Minister’s leadership. Modi, adept at judging the public mood, was aware that people expected him to “walk the talk” in acting tough against India’s implacable enemy. Public opinion in the country was inflamed. People were calling for an all-out war against Pakistan. Even saner voices were advocating at least some demonstrable retribution. Modi was aware of the public sentiment and the anger that was building up in popular perception.<sup>33</sup>

On September 29, 2016 India claimed to have executed ‘surgical strikes’ against the suspected militant targets inside Azad Jammu and Kashmir, raising acute concerns about war between the two countries. The Indian government claimed that strikes comprised 70-80 Special Forces individuals, who killed around 35 to 70 militants in these strikes. Pakistani government rejected these claims, contesting that Indian forces had crossed the LoC from few places, but were driven back swiftly. Pakistan

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<sup>30</sup> “Why the Death of Militant Burhan Wani has Kashmiris up in Arms,” *BBC News*, July 11, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-36762043>.

<sup>31</sup> Sardar Sikandar, “PM Dedicates Aug 14 to Kashmir Cause,” *The Express Tribune*, 14 August, 2014; and “Highlights of Modi’s Independence Day speech,” *The Hindu*, 15 August, 2016, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Highlights-of-Modis-Independence-Day-speech>.

<sup>32</sup> “Isolate ‘Terrorist State’ Pakistan, says Rajnath Singh after Kashmir Attack,” *NDTV*, September 18, 2016, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/1460127>.

<sup>33</sup> Nitin A. Gokhale, “The Inside Story of India’s 2016 ‘Surgical Strikes,’” *The Diplomat*, September 23, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/09/the-inside-story-of-indias-2016-surgical-strikes/>.

denied any surgical strikes on the militant bases.<sup>34</sup> According to the Indian media reports Uri attack was pre-orchestrated by Pakistan. The news rooms of Indian TV channels were playing with the concept that Pakistani Government wanted to start a war with India. On many occasions the Indian media personalities engaged in provoking war by using unverified sources as credible information for consumption of the general public. The media willingly jumped in the Uri crisis to generate hate and war mongering in the Indian public. Indian News Channels and Radio Broadcasts convinced their citizens that India was ready for war, and that Pakistan stood isolated after the Uri attack. Sonia Shukla, one of the saner voices in Indian media, observed “As the Indian media raises its relentless war cry, the government may find itself trapped between public demand for action and no viable military options. In such an event, how will the government dismount the tiger it is riding?”<sup>35</sup> Other sober elements in India also lamented the hate-charged and jingoistic media coverage of Uri and raised concerns about its peril. But there was little effect of these sobering voices, and the “voices of war” seemed to have prevailed.

The Uri attack has seen extensive coverage on print and television media. The nationalistic emotions (virtually amounting to jingoism) built over the last three years have led to the public- and some in the media- demanding an immediate response which impinges on the Government’s flexibility in strategic decision-making. There is a danger of public emotions and political compulsions forcing a hasty decision.<sup>36</sup>

Indian mainstream Hindi and English channels continued to accord overwhelmingly aggressive and emotionally charged nationalistic coverage to the surgical strikes. Clearly, the coverage was a combination of militant nationalistic speech and religiously maligned designation of Kashmiri and Pakistani populations.<sup>37</sup> This was a dangerous undertaking

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<sup>34</sup> “India says Raid Across LOC Hit Pakistan-Based Militants; Pakistan Denies Raid Occurred,” *CNBC*, September 29, 2016, <https://www.cnbc.com/2016/09/29.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Sonia Trikha Shukla, “Is the Indian Media Forcing the Government into a War with Pakistan?” *The Caravan Magazine*, September 26, 2016, <https://caravanmagazine.in/vantage/indian-media-forcing-government-war-pakistan>.

<sup>36</sup> Lt Gen HS Panag, “Some Action Against Pakistan is Imperative for Indian Morale,” *NewsLaundry*, September 21, 2016, <https://www.newsLaundry.com/2016/09/21/uriattack-how-should-india-respond-to-189>.

<sup>37</sup> Sushmita Pandit and Saayan Chattopadhyay, “Coverage of the Surgical Strike on Television News in India,” *Journalism Practice* 12, no. 2 (2018): 162-176.

because the media induced public pressure on the leadership to take a military action against Pakistan. This could have caused deterrence break down with apocalyptic consequences.

### **Media Frenzy and PM Modi's Aggressive Decision**

On 19 September 2016, the day following Uri attack, *The Times of India* published a report quoting the unspecified government sources and security officials to claim that Indian army would bleed Pakistan all along the 778 km long LoC through punitive strikes and concentrated artillery firepower.<sup>38</sup> A day later on 20<sup>th</sup> September, the general tone of the stories and opinion pieces published in *The Times of India* had established that the war with Pakistan was inevitable. On 22 September, BJP leader Yashwant Sinha published an article in *The Indian Express* titled "Limits of Restraint" in which he pleaded that "appropriate military response to Pakistan" was the need of the hour. He went on to suggest "that the nature of military response and its timing should be left to the armed forces, but it should not be indefinitely postponed."<sup>39</sup>

The war drums were ever louder in the realm of Indian TV news channels since 18 September 2016. The TV anchors created sets of "War Room" and vehemently dismissed the few voices who dared to suggest political, economic and diplomatic options to deal with Pakistan.<sup>40</sup> "News anchors across television channels looked angry and revengeful as they donned the amplified versions of their usual, quarrelsome selves."<sup>41</sup> Gaurav Sawant, the executive editor and anchor of *India Today* news channel, presented "To the Point" show in the prime time. Instead of wearing the usual nicely tailored suit, he chose to appear in "commando style khaki slacks and brown vest" to mimic a reporter on the war front and called his post-Uri set of the show as "the War Room." In one of the shows, during the discussion with Admiral KK Nayyar, the Indian Navy's retired vice chief, Sawant dismissed Admiral's suggestion of using diplomatic, economic and political measures.<sup>42</sup> He retorted that only a befitting military response against Pakistan would entail success. The English news channel *Times Now* remained busy in issuing the war threats to Pakistan every evening starting from 18 September. "The channel, convinced that India has already secured itself a diplomatic victory over its

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<sup>38</sup> Rajat Pundit, "Army to Turn on Heat, Asks Govt to Consider Cross-Border Strikes," *The Times of India*, September 19, 2016, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17512786.2017.1397529>.

<sup>39</sup> Yashwant Sinha, "Limits of Restraint," *The Indian Express*, September 22, 2016, <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/3043013/>

<sup>40</sup> Shukla, "Is the Indian Media Forcing the Government."

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

neighbour, is now fiercely advocating a strategic push.”<sup>43</sup> The channel *News X* continuously advocated the theme that “India will punish Pakistan” and “India to diplomatically isolate Pakistan.” A report on *Zee News* on 24 September claimed that “Pakistan had designated some targets inside India”- justifying that there was no choice for India but to opt for war. Shankar Roy Chowdhury, the retired chief of the army staff, blurted on *NDTV* that India should raise its own bands of “fidayeen fighters” and unleash them inside Pakistan for causing mayhem and destruction.<sup>44</sup> On 26 September, Hindi newspaper *Dainik Jagran* threatened that India would withdraw from “The Indus Waters Treaty.”

The incessant onslaught of Indian TV news channels to initiate war against Pakistan since 18 September 2016 convinced Prime Minister Modi to make up his mind in favour of war with Pakistan. On the evening of 23 September, Modi along with Ajit Doval and Defence Minister Rajnath, was briefed at the operations room of the Army Headquarters. It was here that Prime Minister Modi gave the go ahead for the attacks across the LoC.<sup>45</sup> There were little doubts that decision to take a risky military operation under the nuclear environment was ripe with cataclysmic dangers. And the decision was compelled by the jingoistic media frenzy of the past six days.<sup>46</sup> When the Indian army carried out the so-called surgical strikes midnight 28-29 September 2016; the Indian news media covered the development with ecstatic patriotic narrative. “What was supposed to be a covert military operation against terrorism became morphed into political rhetoric aggravated by the unwarranted jingoism of television news channels and social media.”<sup>47</sup> This national euphoria was aptly magnified and celebrated by the TV news channels and media houses as proof of their successful media campaign. In actuality, it raised the bar for India’s political leadership a notch higher in the nuclear risk taking- a fact that was later confirmed in India’s Balakot misadventure.

### **Claim of Surgical Strikes and Indian Media’s Self Interest**

There appeared to be self-serving motives, especially of Indian mainstream English and vernacular TV news networks in fanning the nationalistic and jingoistic fervour against Pakistan during the time of

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<sup>43</sup> “Uri Terrorist Attack-Time For India To Respond HARD To Pakistan: The Newshour Debate,” *Times Now*, September 18, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSqW5utxuI>.

<sup>44</sup> “Former Army Chief Wants India to Raise 'Suicide Squad',” *The Express Tribune*, September 19, 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Gokhale, “The Inside Story.”

<sup>46</sup> Shukla, “Is the Indian Media Forcing the Government?”

<sup>47</sup> Pandit & Chattopadhyay, “Coverage of Surgical Strikes on Television.”

crises. The mainstream news channels of *Aaj Tak*, *Times Now*, *News X*, *NDTV* and *Zee TV* dominated an estimated 60 per cent media coverage of the mammoth Indian population of 1.3 billion.<sup>48</sup> Their ratings increased at least two fold the routine ratings during the crises period and so did their revenues from the advertisements and viewership. The TV news channels spoke vehemently in favour of the military aggression which was linked with the national security of India to enhance their ratings and viewership. The ratings of *Aaj Tak* channel increased by more than 64 per cent during the coverage of surgical strikes as compared to the week before.<sup>49</sup> A record viewership of 160 million people was registered by *Aaj Tak* TV channel while covering the surgical strikes. *Times Now* witnessed two-fold increase in its viewership during the same time. Both, *Aaj Tak* and *Times Now*, retained the top position during the coverage. The English news channels doubled their viewership in the week of surgical strikes.<sup>50</sup> This important media undercurrent had been endorsed by the former intelligent chiefs of India and Pakistan when they pointed out the profit-seeking tendencies of Indian media. They maintained that “the media (in particular television and social media) profit by inflaming public sentiment and heightening the danger of war.”<sup>51</sup>

These facts point to an increasing tendency in Indian media for creating a nationalistic vehemence and hostility towards Pakistan as their enemy. There is also growing propensity of the Indian news networks to increase their revenues manifolds by doing so. Such a risky pursuit of self-interest needs to be watched by the Indian intelligentsia. And the quest for moderation and maturity needs to be preferred to bring calm and maturity between the nuclear rivals during the crisis situations. In this regard, the following concerns of an enlightened Indian political commentator Garga Chatterjee, needs to be considered seriously by the Indian media channels:

Mainstream media should be cognizant of the fact that India and Pakistan are armed with nuclear weapons and should educate their audience about the hugely destructive effects of a nuclear conflict. Media should critically examine claims made by their

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<sup>48</sup> Raushni Bhagia, “News Channels Garner Major Viewership as Indian Army Performs Surgical Strike,” *Best Media Info*, October 7, 2016, <https://bestmediainfo.com/2016/10/news-channels-garner-major-viewership-as-indian-army-performs-surgical-strike/>.

<sup>49</sup> “News Channels Strike Highest Ever Viewership Post-Surgical Strike Week,” *Best Media Info*, October 14, 2016, <https://bestmediainfo.com/2016/10/>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> A.S. Dulat, Asad Durrani and Aditya Sinha, *The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace* (New Delhi: Harper Collins India, 2018), 213.

respective armies and governments. Truth and realism should drive public opinion, not jingoism.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

This research has attempted to explore how Indian media coverage of events, especially, in the crises between India and Pakistan shapes the public opinion in ways that stoke jingoism and war. The study evidences that media perceptions create lasting influences on citizens' attitudes towards Pakistan and highlights the lurking peril of the Indian media's insinuation of war during crisis situations with Pakistan. The Uri incident of 18 September 2016 was a violent struggle of the Kashmiri fighters to assert their right of self-determination. Following the incident, Indian leadership blamed Pakistan for abetting the attack without doing credible investigations. At the same time, the Indian media became a source of arousing anti-Pakistan sentiments in the general public, and pressured the Indian decision makers into making the decision to carry out surgical strikes across the LoC. In this way, Indian media became an instrument in fomenting war between the two nuclear armed states. The jingoistic frenzy created by the prime time TV news channels is found to be particularly important in inciting the Indian public opinion for war. The study also finds a linkage between media's corporate self-interest and its creation of nation-wide nationalistic excitement to "punish" Pakistan. This shows that media's irresponsible and self-serving role during Uri crisis partly led to a dangerous warlike situation between the two nuclear armed states. The study has attempted to raise awareness about responsibility of the media in creation and maintenance of peace and not war between the nuclear states. It is also highlighted that the political leaders in India tend to exploit the feelings of frustration of their people and make hard to fulfill promises with them. Consequently, every Indian government encounters greater media-manipulated public pressure to "punish" Pakistan than the preceding one. India's Balakot misadventure of 26 February 2019 has reaffirmed that Indian media's manipulation and insinuation of its public and leadership has seeped deeper in the structures of Indian state and society- and could result in more ominous and unfortunate consequences in future.

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<sup>52</sup> Garga Chatterjee quoted in Arafatul Islam, "How Indian and Pakistani Media are Covering Kashmir Unrest," *DW*, September 20, 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/how-indian-and-pakistani-media-are-covering-kashmir-unrest/a-19562791>.

## A FRAGILE SHIELD: INDIA'S BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE

Asim Ahmed\* & Mahroona Hussain Syed\*\*

*"Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding"*  
(Albert Einstein)

### Abstract

*India's interest in developing Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) originates from its desire to counter ballistic missiles threats emanating from its traditional rivals in the region. Therefore, in 2001, India positively responded to United States of America's offer of BMD, which created consternation among the regional countries particularly in Pakistan about its effects on the prevailing strategic stability and prospective arms race in the region. India's ability to develop a BMD has been debated due to fallibility of the system particularly taking the lessons from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty 1972, when USA and former USSR decided to enter into the treaty due to the weakness of the shield and degeneration of nuclear deterrence, which could provoke a nuclear war. This article analyses India's rationale and current ability to develop the 'defensive shield' and questions the assertion that BMD as a concept is a 'defensive mechanism' given India's geographical vulnerabilities and availability of cost-effective offensive strategies to counter BMD.*

**Keywords:** *BMD, NMD, TMD, THAAD, India, Pakistan, China, Nuclear Deterrence, ABM Treaty*

### Introduction

India's ambition to seek Ballistic Missile Defence is justified as an effort to protect itself against ballistic missile threats emanating from its

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traditional rivals and necessarily advertised as an exercise in self-defence.<sup>1</sup> Such a venture, however is reminiscent of the Cold War era military strategies adopted by the two ideological blocks led by the former Soviet Union and United States of America heavily relying on the Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), as these proved to be the most reliable means to deliver nuclear weapons upon the adversary's mainland. The competing military strategies of the superpowers during the era focused on deterring the rival with the annihilating effects of nuclear weapons (NWs) and included prominent deterrence strategies of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), massive retaliation, and flexible response. However, amongst them, the ICBMs are the most reliable means to cover longer ranges and reach the target location with precision, which caused insecurity amongst both the Cold War rivals and forced them to look for security elsewhere, possibly with a strategy, which could offset the inherent advantages of ICBMs. Such a strategy was named BMD.

Ballistic Missile Defence, propounded as the 'defensive' strategy was conceptualised to protect the mainland against the nuclear armed hostile ballistic missiles.<sup>2</sup> A prototype BMD is a multi-layered system, capable of providing early warning of the missile launch, while simultaneously tracking and intercepting the incoming missile.<sup>3</sup> The components of such a system include radars and interceptors. Radars provide early-warning and interceptors destroy the incoming missiles during the flight. Simultaneously, over time, modern technologies have permitted real-time information to flow from longer distances to the interceptor. Such information is extremely useful for BMD system, as it enhances its capacity to intercept the missile and overall viability of the system. Infrared is an advancement, which is greatly useful in the BMD system for aiming at the targeted missile.<sup>4</sup> The high speed of laser also greatly helps in surveillance, target detection, target tracking, and discrimination.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, "Strategic Implications of India's Ballistic Missile Defense," *Working Paper*, June 18, 2019, <https://fas.org/wp.../Strategic-Implications-of-India's-Ballistic-Missile-Defense.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Henry S. Rowen, "Introduction," in *Getting Mad: Nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction, Its Origins and Practice*, ed. Henry D. Sokolski (Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2004), 1-13.

<sup>3</sup> Dean A. Wilkening, "A Simple Model for Calculating Ballistic Missile Defense Effectiveness," *Science & Global Security* 8, no. 2, (1999): 183-215.

<sup>4</sup> See "How does Missile Defence Works," *Union of Concerned Scientist*, <https://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear-weapons/missile-defense/how-gmd-missile-defense-works>.

<sup>5</sup> M. Z. Tidrow and W.R Dyer, "Infrared Sensors for Ballistic Missile Defense," *Elsevier* 42, no. 3-5(June 2001): 333-336.

BMD has many variants like for smaller areas or some installations or area where forces are deployed and though too expensive but it could be considered for the complete state. The missile defence for complete state is called National Missile Defence (NMD). In planning for NMD, it is organised in layers to ensure that it is not penetrated easily.<sup>6</sup> On the other side, Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) is suitable for smaller operational areas previously known as Theatre Missile Defence (TMD).

TMD was deployed in the Gulf War, when USA deployed Patriot Air Defence (PAD) system in the Middle East to protect US troops from Iraqi Scud rockets. Although it is to be noticed that USA, being a signatory of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty 1972, was in violation of it.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, in the wake of failure of the US to provide effective shield by PAC-2/3 (Patriot Advanced Capability) against incoming Iraqi rockets, THAAD provided a more comprehensive shield once deployed with endo-atmospheric area or air defence. As per Michael Elleman and Michael J. Zagurek, Jr., THAAD operates on exo-atmospheric intercept with a capability to intercept short, medium, and intermediate missiles up to the range of 1000 kms.<sup>8</sup> However, NMD is an entire system providing missile defence to a state in all the stages of missile launch: launch, boost, intermediate, and terminal phase.

In 2001, the USA decided to withdraw from ABM Treaty 1972 and deployed BMD in the face of missile threats from terrorists or rogue states of Iran and North Korea.<sup>9</sup> The decision had different implications for the US and the rival states without a BMD. On the one hand, nuclear deterrence was further strengthened as well as the second strike capability and on the other an opportunity arose for offence to a state deploying BMD.<sup>10</sup> This was a dangerous proposition for the rival state; as the BMD state or defender after feeling secure in a BMD, may provoke it for an offensive as well.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, a state without a BMD may expect a pre-emptive strike. This fear may even provoke such a state for first strike.

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<sup>6</sup> Charles L. Glaser and Steve Fetter, "National Missile Defense and the Future of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy," *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001): 40-92.

<sup>7</sup> ABM Treaty 1972, signed between USA and USSR at Moscow on 26 May 1972.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Elleman and Michael J. Zagurek, Jr., "THAAD: What it Can and Can't Do," *38 North* (March 10, 2016), [https://www.38north.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/2016-03-10\\_THAAD-What-It-Can-and-Cant-Do.pdf](https://www.38north.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/2016-03-10_THAAD-What-It-Can-and-Cant-Do.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Terence Neilan, "Bush Pulls out of ABM Treaty; Putin Calls Move a Mistake," *The New York Times*, December 13, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/13/international/bush-pulls-out-of-abm-treaty-putin-calls-move-a-mistake.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth G. Weiss, "The Limits of Diplomacy: Missile Proliferation, Diplomacy, and Defense," *World Affairs* 163, no. 3 (2001): 118.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

Baldwin considered, "there are, of course, situations in which one state's efforts to increase its security reduce the security of other states."<sup>12</sup>

The USA's decision to deploy BMD was an important milestone as many states considered that deployment of BMD by USA could help in countering missile threats emanating from the rival states. India also considered that BMD capability will help counter missiles threats originating from the regional neighbouring states. However, it is a matter of debate whether BMD system is able to provide effective security to states. This article analyses India's rationale and struggle towards developing the BMD shield. It tries to find out whether the BMD will be able to guarantee an effective shield to India's mainland? Answer to these questions particularly become important, as the deterrence stability will be directly affected by the Indian decision to deploy BMD. In order to offset the advantage to India, the rivals may look for complementing the nuclear deterrence through other means.

### India's Gambit for BMD

The USA's decision to finally abrogate the ABM treaty in 2001, and deploy BMD for itself and to offer it to friendly countries, was a matter of concern for the world except a few allies of USA.<sup>13</sup> The USA's considerations for developing BMD in the Cold War were against the missile threat that originated from USSR. However, in the post-Cold War, USA wanted to counter ICBMs originating from North Korea and Iran.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, this decision was not a good news for the proponents of disarmament and non-proliferation. Particular repercussions of such a decision are expected between Indo-Pakistan, Eastern Europe, and Japan, Taiwan, and China.<sup>15</sup>

India expressed keen interest in USA's BMD offer, as Delhi intended to pursue Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) to ward-off missile threats from the regional neighbouring countries.<sup>16</sup> However, there could be other reasons, which could be attributed to India's desire to pursue

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<sup>12</sup> David A. Baldwin, *War*, (London: SAGE Publication, 2005), 16.

<sup>13</sup> Colin S. Gray, "European Perspectives on U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense," *Comparative Strategy* 21, no. 4 (2002): 279-310, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495930290043056a>.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Dean Burns, *A Missile Defence Systems of George W. Bush: A Critical Analysis* (USA: Praeger, 2010), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Brad Roberts and Shen Dingli, "The Nuclear Equation in South Asia," in *Chaillot Papers, Nuclear Weapons: a New Great Debate* (France: Institute for Security Studies for Western European Union, 2001): 145-147, <https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/cp048e.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Ashley J. Tellis, "The Evolution of U.S.-India Ties: Missile Defence in an Emerging Relationship," *International Security* 30, no. 4 (2004), 131-151.

BMD. For example, India may perceive BMD to be more of a status symbol as development of BMD will make her a part of big powers who are pursuing BMD programme. In a nutshell, the decision carried some serious strategic problems for the region, which would upset the prevailing strategic stability.

Indian conventional and strategic development programmes are a clear manifestation of Indian strategic goals and culture put forth by their political leadership. Before becoming an overt nuclear power in 1998, India conducted a nuclear test in 1974, describing it as Peaceful Nuclear Explosion or Smiling Buddha.<sup>17</sup> After 1998 nuclear tests, India pursued to achieve a triad delivery system for its nuclear weapons i.e. air, surface to surface missiles and sea-based missiles.<sup>18</sup> India's effort to achieve triad delivery means reflected its persistent effort to strengthen deterrence.

Prime Minister Vajpayee's interest in USA's offers created a huge debate among the strategic community in India.<sup>19</sup> The opposition parties in India criticized the government as this decision was taken without entering into any worthwhile deliberations among stake holders of the state. There was also criticism that India's decision was too early as until then repercussion of USA withdrawal from ABM Treaty on international politics were not thoroughly debated by USA and NATO at policy and academic levels.<sup>20</sup> On the other side, the proponents of the BMD in India were wary of missile threats coming from neighbouring Pakistan and China. In the realist paradigm, both states were perceived as restricting India's rise in global politics. The ideological differences between India and Pakistan, predominately played a role in shaping strategic thinking in India.<sup>21</sup> Shinichi observed that it was always India, which took the lead in development of strategic weapons and conventional weapons while Pakistan followed to achieve strategic balance in order to avoid being coerced by its arch adversary.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> John F. Burns, "India Carries Out Nuclear Tests in Defiance of International Treaty," *The New York Times*, May 12, 1998, <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/world/asia/051298india-nuke.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Naeem Ahmed Salik, *The Genesis of South Asian Nuclear Deterrence, Pakistan's Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 192.

<sup>19</sup> Tellis, "The Evolution of U.S.-India Ties," 113-151.

<sup>20</sup> Clifford Krauss, "Canada Says It Won't Join Missile Shield with the US," *New York Times*, February 24, 2005, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/24/world/americas/canada-says-it-wont-join-missile-shield-with-the-us.html>.

<sup>21</sup> Thorsten Wojczewski, "The Persistency of the India-Pakistan Conflict: Chances and Obstacles of the Bilateral Composite Dialogue," *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 3, no. 1 (2014), 319-345.

<sup>22</sup> Izuyama Marie Ogawa Shinichi, "The Nuclear Policy of India and Pakistan," *NIDS Security Reports*, no. 4 (2003), 59-89.

South Asia Analysis Group, an Indian based think tank considers that India and Pakistan are vigorously engaged in revising and refining their delivery system.<sup>23</sup> However, to justify India's pursuit of BMD, the group offered stereotypical arguments that China is supporting Pakistan in the development of missile technology.<sup>24</sup> Pant also supports the view that China is involved in building-up missiles of different ranges at Tibet in the immediate neighbourhood of India. These threats are multiplied once seen against the backdrop of Pakistan-China cooperation in such strategic ventures. He also points a finger on a not so good non-proliferation record of both states, which is a source of continuous concern for India. He says:-

....the transfer of missiles and missile-related items from China and Pakistan to states as far and wide as Syria, Iran, North Korea, Libya, and Saudi Arabia has been a constant feature of the Asian security landscape for quite some time now.<sup>25</sup>

Pant contends that there is an immediate need for India to pursue missile defence. Such missile defence will enhance India's deterrent capability against such threats. He also emphasizes on the necessity to pursue limited indigenous missile defence capability, which can be continuously pursued thereafter.<sup>26</sup> It has been observed that Pakistan has been largely the focus of strategic development taking place in India, despite India's frequent denial of the idea, as it portrays China as their main strategic rival in the region. This Indian contention does not hold true, once deployment pattern of India's strategic and conventional forces is examined objectively. The huge amount of RAPIDs and mechanised forces of India do not find their employment against China in the Himachal region or across it. Simultaneously, these forces find no application for the other militarily not so relevant states of the region. The ideal employment is in the deserts in the south of Pakistan or its plains in the center. The exponents of Indian missile defence system consider that this is the most prudent way to keep Pakistan's nuclear threat in check.<sup>27</sup> It appears to be an effort to build a narrative against the rationale of Pakistan's nuclear

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<sup>23</sup> Suresh Dhanda, "Dangers of Missile Race in South Asia: an India-Pakistan Perspective," *International Affairs and Global Strategy* 2 (2011) [www.iiste.org](http://www.iiste.org).

<sup>24</sup> R.K. Mishra, "Nuclear and Missile Threats to India," *South Asia Analysis Group*, Paper 296, accessed November 29, 2019, [www.saag.org/papers3/paper296.html](http://www.saag.org/papers3/paper296.html).

<sup>25</sup> Harsh V. Pant, "India Debate Missile Defence," *Defense Studies* 5, no. 2, (2006), 228-246, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702430500336418>.

<sup>26</sup> Sandeep Dikshit, "India to Build Missile Shield with US Help," *The Hindu*, June 2, 2002, <https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/india-to-build-missile-shield-with-us-help/article27850317.ece>.

<sup>27</sup> Pant, *India Debates Missile Defense*, 228-246.

weapons to mislead the world and simultaneously project its efforts for pursuing BMD to counter it.<sup>28</sup> Actually, this is based on a classical understanding of deterrence theory, based on denial. USA strategic thinkers during the Cold War propagated similar ideas that if rival state is denied from achieving its objective through nuclear strike, it will be effectively deterred from taking this course.<sup>29</sup> This is how support for BMD was generated in USA. India's strategic planners on the other hand, manipulating the fact, tried to project their concerns that India's missile programme is behind Pakistan's missile due to the fact that Pakistan missile programme has its links with North Korea and China. In the same backdrop, missile defence for India would be able to effectively check such missile threats.<sup>30</sup>

Harsh Pant justifies India's stance to opt for BMD system as:

....the 1999 Kargil conflict demonstrated for many the inability of India to come up with an appropriate response to the stability/instability paradox operating in the sub-continent that has put India at a strategic disadvantage vis-à-vis Pakistan. A missile defense system would help in blunting Pakistan's 'first-use' nuclear force posture, that had led Islamabad to believe that it had inhibited India from launching a conventional attack against it for fear of escalation to the nuclear level. With a missile defense system in place, India would be able to restore the status quo ante, thereby making conventional military options against its rival potent again.<sup>31</sup>

Ashley Tellis also supported the BMD cover of India. He contended that there is a fear in India that Pakistan government did not have sufficient control over its nuclear weapons and India would be the likely target. Therefore, nuclear capability alone would not be sufficient to offset this disadvantage and thus required BMD to counter it. Building his argument, he emphasized that the nuclear and strategic coercion by Pakistan since 1980's had helped Islamabad to support a number of insurgencies in India, particularly in Kashmir, as Pakistan's nuclear capability gave it immunity from any conventional response from India.<sup>32</sup> President Pervez Musharraf during India and Pakistan stand-off following attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 was quoted stating; "Indian government had started pulling back its troops due to his various covert

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 228-246.

<sup>29</sup> Phil Williams, *Contemporary Strategy II, the Nuclear Powers* (Great Britain: Croom Helm Ltd', 1987), 44.

<sup>30</sup> Pant, *India Debates Missile Defense*, 228-246.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 228-246.

<sup>32</sup> Tellis, *The Evolution of U.S.-India Ties*, 139.

messages to the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, that if a war was imposed on Pakistan it would not remain a conventional one.”<sup>33</sup> According to Tellis, proliferation of technologies i.e. missile and nuclear material was another issue, which was not directly linked to developing ballistic missile but did reinforce the thinking in India.<sup>34</sup> In order to deal with such threats, India needed a long term strategy including nuclear doctrine and ballistic missile defence.<sup>35</sup>

Another contributing factor towards developing BMD by India is China. Persisting border disputes with China towards Himachal Pradesh and war of 1962 on the issue<sup>36</sup> and power politics in the region will continue to be part of the strategic calculus within India. In addition, in Indo-US strategic partnership, countering rise of China in the region stands at the center.<sup>37</sup>

Pant also considers that there are two major areas where strategic cooperation between India and USA is likely to benefit India in its strategic outlook. One is BMD and the other is the nuclear deal with USA. Both states are rapidly progressing in these areas, which underwrite their closer strategic partnership. Although in this partnership, India benefits the most as it helps in reaching out to advanced technologies while USA also finds a market for its defence productions.

The likely outcome of Indo-US strategic-partnership is the strategic instability in the region. The two nuclear powers in the neighbourhood of China will go for balance of power, which has been disturbed. Nuclear deterrence is likely to be strengthened through an increase advancement in technologies as well as through increasing cooperation between China and Pakistan. This may trigger an arms race in the region,<sup>38</sup> reinforcing primacy of traditional security over human security. In addition, BMD protected India may lower threshold of nuclear deterrence and provoke the regional countries to go for first strike.<sup>39</sup>

Conversely, strategic thinking in India does not overrule the USA offer for BMD as a counter-proliferation measure in a quid pro quo to missile defence.<sup>40</sup> India might be constrained in developing strategic nuclear posture as per the USA's security requirements, which may

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<sup>33</sup> Shamim-ur-Rahman, "Warning Forced India to Pull Back Troops, Says President," *Dawn*, December 31, 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Tellis, *The Evolution of U.S.-India Ties*, 113-151.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Brigadier J.P. Dalvi, *Himalayan Blunder* (Bombay: Dinkar Sakri Kar, 1969), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Tellis, *The Evolution of U.S.-India Ties*.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Pant, *India Debates Missile Defense*, 228-246.

<sup>40</sup> Bharat Karnad, "Missile Defense: Immature Technology, Counter-Proliferation Trap," *Force* (May 2004); Bharat Karnad, "After Pak, India," *Asian Age*, April 12, 2004: 103.

ultimately increase India's reliance on USA in the nuclear domain. Additionally, how much is India prepared to financially support the technology, which is itself in its early stages of advancement, particularly once compared with the likely high cost and possibility of being out-dated in an earlier timeframe due to flow of modern technologies like infrared and space.<sup>41</sup> However, despite drawbacks like inability to develop a perfect system due to technological want, exuberant cost, prospective arms race in the region and degeneration to nuclear deterrence, causing nuclear war; India still preferred to adopt BMD.

### **India's Pursuit of BMD**

The basic design of India's BMD is based on USA's BMD design manifested during the Gulf War. Other contributory factors include 'used technology from Russia and Israel' and indigenous efforts. Given that, a general idea of how USA's BMD is structured would give a fair idea of what Indian design looks like.

In case of USA, Phased Array Tracking Intercept of Target (PATRIOT) is the basic programme under which USA's ballistic missile defence is structured. Over the last two decades, the programme has passed stage 2 and stage 3 that included its operation during the Gulf War. The stage 2, commonly known as Patriot Advanced Capability 2 (PAC-2) possesses both the components missile defence and air defence.<sup>42</sup> The system has the capability to engage fighter aircraft, cruise missiles and even intercept short range tactical missiles. The capability of the interceptor to achieve an altitude of 24 kilometres and with a range of 70 kilometres is its obvious feature. It has potential to work in all types of weather conditions and has a flying time ranging between 3 seconds to 3.5 minutes.<sup>43</sup>

As per Sharma, India perceived missile threats from Pakistan at the end of last century and wanted to secure itself. The first such effort was observed, when 6xbatteries of S-300 were purchased by India. These missiles were of Russian origin and were capable of intercepting M- 11 missiles.<sup>44</sup> This was the time, when India started to pursue its indigenous missiles defence system and to look for radars from market for early warning. The system was called Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) and Akash and

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<sup>41</sup> Pant, *India Debates Missile Defense*, 228–246.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Ashok Sharma, "India's Missile Defence Programme: Threat Perceptions and Technological Evolution," *Manekshaw Paper no. 15* (2009): 5, <http://www.kwpub.com/images/Papers/Manekshaw%20papers/Manekshaw%20Papers%20%20List.pdf>.

Trishul formed the basic missiles of the system.<sup>45</sup> Israel provided assistance to develop radar suitable for the system.<sup>46</sup> These were long range tracking radars and called LRTR. French company Thales also helped in improving the tracking system of the radar. The technological development for ABM continued but by the end of last century, India was prepared with the basic structure of indigenous PAD.<sup>47</sup> According to Sharma:-

....the Indian Ballistic Missile Defence Programme, an initiative to develop and deploy a multi-layered ballistic missile defence system, is a two-tiered system consisting of two interceptor missiles, namely Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) missile for high altitude interception, and the Advanced Air Defence (AAD) missile for lower altitude interception. The two-tiered shield will be able to intercept any incoming missile launched 5,000 km away.<sup>48</sup>

The PAD and AAD were tested in 2006-2007, and after conducting these tests India became the fourth country with anti-ballistic missile system. The others were US, Russia and Israel. India claimed its system to be indigenously-built. The evidence of first near-successful test was found in 2009, when Danush, a ship launched missile, was intercepted by the system. The target Danush was engaged at an altitude of 75 kilometres and followed this trajectory for a distance of 1500 kilometres, whereas, on low altitude interception, India had been working on a set of two missiles. These were called as AD-1&2. Both were high speed interceptors and were able to engage missile with a range of 5,000 kilometres. The expected time for the completion and induction of these missiles was 2011.<sup>49</sup> Later in 2012, India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) claimed that it had achieved missile defence, which could be deployed at two locations on short notice,<sup>50</sup> yet the tests conducted in 2015 were not

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<sup>45</sup> Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, "Countering Indian Ballistic Missile Defense & Strategic Stability in South Asia," *Margalla Papers* (2018), [https://ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra\\_pub/articles/margalla-paper/Margalla-Papers-2018/02-Countering-Indian-BMD.pdf](https://ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/articles/margalla-paper/Margalla-Papers-2018/02-Countering-Indian-BMD.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> Tellis, *The Evolution of U.S.-India Ties*, 113-151.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-23.

<sup>48</sup> Sharma, *India's Missile Defence Programme*.

<sup>49</sup> Sandeep Unnithan, "DRDO Readies Shield against Chinese ICBMs," *India Today*, March 9, 2009, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/DRDO+readies+shield+against+Chinese+ICBMs/1/31874.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Air Marshal Narayan Menon, "Ballistic Missile Defence System for India," *Indian Defence Review* 27.3, September 2012, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/ballistic-missile-defence-system-for-india/>.

considered to be successful.<sup>51</sup> However, the tests conducted in 2016-2017 by DRDO were declared successful, where Prithvi missiles were fired from Chandipur, India, and engaged by supersonic missile at Abul Kalam Island, Bay of Bengal, in both endo-atmospheric and exo-atmospheric interceptions.<sup>52</sup>

India did not accept PAC-2, as according to them this was an older version. Its upgraded version PAC-3 was tried in the Gulf War. It had a fairly high success rate and claimed to be even more than 95 percent. Pant considered that, "the US might be willing to offer India the advanced version of PAC-2 missiles with the radar of the latest PAC-3 so that when India is ready, it can upgrade its missile defence capability."<sup>53</sup>

The interceptors provided with PAC-3 were capable of covering much bigger area in comparison to its earlier version.<sup>54</sup> According to Lockheed Martin report:

PAC-3 interceptors can protect an area of about seven times greater than the original Patriot system. The PAC-3 missile is a smaller and high velocity interceptor that defeats incoming targets by direct, body-to-body impact, known as hit-to-kill system. It has a precision guidance system, featuring an active on-board radar seeker, enables complete target destruction through the kinetic energy released upon direct impact of the target. The PAC-3 provides guidance system to the missile to acquire the target shortly before the intercept, select the optimal aim point and initiate the terminal guidance to ensure target kill. The canister is approximately the same size as a PAC-2 canister but contains four missiles and tubes instead of a single round; and therefore, has the ability to fire 16 missiles against any incoming missile or threat.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> "Interceptor Missile Tested 7 Times, DRDO's Rajinikanth Moment Still Far," *The Indian Express*, May 4, 2015, <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/interceptor-missile-tested-7-times-drdo-rajinikanth-moment-still-far/dpuf>.

<sup>52</sup> Franz-Stefan Gady, "India's Advanced Air Defense Interceptor Destroys Incoming Ballistic Missile in Test," *The Diplomat*, December 28, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/.../indias-advanced-air-defense-interceptor-destroys-incoming>.

<sup>53</sup> Pant, *India Debates Missile Defense*, 228–246.

<sup>54</sup> *PR Newswire Lockheed Martin*, "Lockheed Martin Conducts Successful PAC-3 Missile Test at White Sands Missile Range," accessed June 13, 2020, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/lockheed-martin-conducts-successful-pac-3-missile-test-at-white-sands-missile-range-132998388.html>.

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/products/pac3-mse.html>

According to Sharma, India has already acquired PAC-3 and is aiming at Arrow II Missile system as part of its comprehensive missile defence shield.<sup>56</sup> India is also showing interest in Russian AD system, which also has a module of ABM. It consists of S-300V, S-300PMU systems and S-400 (SA-20 Triumph). India is also keen to acquire S-500, as it will support its BMD for mid-course interception with an extended range of 3500 kilometres. This will be 5<sup>th</sup> Generation ABM system, which “combine the elements of air, missile and space defence for targeting enemy system deeper into space.” This will allow India to reach out to exo-atmospheric and achieve Anti-Satellite (ASAT) access.<sup>57</sup> According to Unnithan, “India is also working for Laser-based BMD for the boost phased interception in next 10-15 years.”<sup>58</sup> NATO also encourages India’s move towards BMD and looks for cooperation in the technological field of the BMD system. It even proposed ABM system to India in following words, “you have a missile threat that confronts you. We have a missile threat that confronts us. It is a different one, but our ability to defend against it could be the same”.<sup>59</sup>

### **Efficacy of India’s BMD**

India is pursuing technologies from different countries in order to develop an effective BMD. Prithvi Air Defence is claimed to be a domestic system with an indigenously developed interceptor but with most of the technologies borrowed from the outside. Simultaneously, India is desirous of having PAC-3 due to the perfection in the kill-rate of the system as narrated above. However, merging different technologies in the system may not bring the kind of perfection a BMD system requires. Evidently, one does not expect perfection in the system right from the beginning but it does carry potential to survive. Therefore, irrespective of the present status of India’s BMD, its efforts towards BMD are likely to increase sense of vulnerability amongst the regional rivals. However, existing vulnerabilities of India’s BMD, is likely to be exploited by the regional rivals.

The first question is about the reliability of India’s BMD. Commenting on the reliability of India’s BMD, Sharma is of the opinion, “there is little apprehension that the existing air defence set-up is formidable and presents an effective challenge to aerial attacks upon airbases and important installations in India.”<sup>60</sup> The present structure of India’s BMD is partially capable of protecting some important sites and

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<sup>56</sup> Sharma, India’s Missile Defence Programme, 1-23.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 1-23.

<sup>58</sup> Unnithan, DRDO Readies Shield against Chinese ICBMs.

<sup>59</sup> “NATO offers Missile Defence Cooperation to India,” *The Hindu*, September 4, 2011, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2424128.ece>.

<sup>60</sup> Sharma, India’s Missile Defence Programme, 1-23.

silos and does not have the capacity to cover complete state or work as NMD. However, once fully functional, the deterrence stability within the region will be disturbed in favour of India. However, India feels that due to its BMD, Pakistan will not be able to effectively employ "First Use" posture to intimidate India.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, owing to vulnerabilities in India's BMD, its rivals are likely to exploit these and may even consider targeting population centres of India and other weak areas to break the will of India.

The electronic and radar coverage by India is leaned towards Pakistan's and China's borders and vulnerable elsewhere, implies that India is more vulnerable in Centre, South and East. This was identified by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India in his report presented to Lok Sabha in 2008, "Indian Air Force (IAF) does not possess adequate number of surveillance radars needed for providing efficient and reliable detection capabilities for ensuring credible Air Defence."<sup>62</sup> Atul Kumar Singh VSM, commenting on the CAG report, confirmed:

Though the deployment pattern based on threat perception has ensured adequate radar coverage on the Western borders and part of Northeast and East, yet a very large part of Indian airspace is bereft of adequate radar cover particularly so in the central India, southern peninsula, coast lines in the west as well as east.<sup>63</sup>

Kumar also identified that there is an no coordination of efforts in civilian and military radars for radar coverage. Military-civil radar coordination and procurement of Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AWACS) will help India to plug in vulnerabilities towards east and south but India's main focus will remain towards its traditional adversaries Pakistan and China towards West, North and East, thereby, leaving opportunity open for exploitation elsewhere.<sup>64</sup>

Manoj Joshi, debating the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) willingness to deploy the BMD around Bombay and New Delhi, first questions the independent validity of the success of the missile tests conducted so far. Secondly, he raises doubts about the capability of Prithvi to engage a solid fuel intermediate missile from Pakistan and China, as Prithvi is liquid fuel, which is slow moving missiles in boost and terminal phase. He is of the opinion that Pakistan will

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<sup>61</sup> Pant, India Debates Missile Defense, 228–246.

<sup>62</sup> Report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India, *Performance Audit Air Force and Navy, No. PA 5 of 2008*, presented in Lok Sabha on October 24, 2008, 25.

<sup>63</sup> Group Captain Atul Kumar Singh VSM, "Deficiency in Air Defence Radar Cover: The CAG Report 2007-08," *Centre of Airpower Studies*, accessed October 31, 2018, [www.aerospaceindia.org/.../2008/10%20December%202008%20-](http://www.aerospaceindia.org/.../2008/10%20December%202008%20-)

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

respond to India's BMD by increasing the number of nuclear capable missiles. He also questions the DRDO claim by enquiring about the security of Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Lucknow, and the rest of the country; once Bombay and New Delhi are protected under the shield.<sup>65</sup>

The next issue relates to the capability of India's BMD to provide an effective shield. During the PAD test in 2009, the interceptor was able to engage the incoming missile at an altitude of 75 kilometres,<sup>66</sup> which means that incoming missiles will be engaged in the endo-atmospheric stage, or in the terminal stage. This is generally believed, that interception at this stage may prevent nuclear explosion but will not guarantee a fool proof protection from the radiations or shock effects.

Another issue relates to effectiveness of BMD to intercept cruise missiles. These can be effectively used against land and sea targets from all the varieties of platform i.e. land, sea, and air.<sup>67</sup> The two basic categories of cruise missiles include anti-ship and land-attack<sup>68</sup> with ranges varying between 25 kilometres for French Exocet and 2200 kilometres for Russian cruise missile. The Russian Cruise Missile AS-15 Kent is capable of carrying 200 kiloton nuclear warhead.<sup>69</sup> The basic difference between anti-ship and land-attack cruise missile lies in their mode of flight in which anti-ship works on heat-seeking sensors and radar and land-attack is equipped with the Global Positioning System GPS.<sup>70</sup> GPS permits cruise missile to follow the layout of terrain and hit the target with precision.

The latest series of Hatf-VII Babur has been tested by Pakistan. The missile has a range of 700 kilometres. The missile has similarity in characteristics with the US Tomahawk. India's BMD may not be able to achieve success against it due to its varied characteristics.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, it may become difficult to counter a cruise missile or combined effect of ICBM and cruise missile from a country, which exists in geographical contiguity to India.

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<sup>65</sup> Manoj Joshi, "Government Baffled over DRDO Chief's Claim on Missile Shield," *India Today*, July 18, 2012, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/government-baffled-over-drdo-chief-claim-on-missile-shield/1/208850.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Sharma, *India's Missile Defence Programme*, 1-23.

<sup>67</sup> Jeff Kueter and Howard Kleinberg, "Cruise Missile Challenge: Designing a Defence against Asymmetrical Threats," (Washington: George C Marshall Institute, 2007), accessed October 23, 2019, <http://www.marshall.org/article.php?id=522>.

<sup>68</sup> Jeff Kueter and Howard Kleinberg, "Cruise Missile Challenge: Designing a Defence against Asymmetrical Threats."

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Pakistan Successfully Test Fires Nuclear-Capable Cruise Missile," *Dawn*, October 28, 2011.

Another factor is the geographical proximity of India with its rivals, which may not permit India's BMD to fully operationalize itself to intercept the incoming missile. In case of Pakistan and India, both share a very long border, which makes India vulnerable to incoming missiles. If ICBM speed is calculated as 7km/sec, it will approximately take 5-7 minutes from Pakistan to reach farther locations in India like Andaman etc. Therefore, India is more vulnerable due its contiguity with regional rivals, Pakistan and China, whereas US enjoys insulation due to its geography. Thereby, it may not be operationally feasible for India to completely provide BMD cover to its mainland against missile threats emanating from both states and even if desire so to do it will be at an excessive cost. In addition, Indian Ocean an important sea route excessively used for trade and its accessibility to rival navies makes India's vulnerability more expounded to sea-launched ballistic missiles. Besides, long and contiguous border of India with China and Pakistan permits both to use innocuous and unconventional ways to offset India's BMD.

Analysing India's BMD from a technological standpoint, one can make a safe guess that India's BMD is nothing more than TMD. However, technical fusion with outside technologies, it may achieve Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) capability to engage missile in exo-atmospheric phase. The inability of India's BMD to intercept target at longer ranges, increases the risk for India as terminal phase interception will have fallout of biological/chemical and nuclear weapons in the host country. The ideal situation to avoid fallout within own state is to carryout boost phase or midcourse interception. Laser, infrared, and satellite technologies provide an answer to achieving long distance interceptions. India tries to behave as a hegemon in the region and avoids political approach towards achieving sustainable security. It continues to build up its military resources in order to achieve the status of regional power. Particularly, present encouraging state of economy also provides it an opportunity to opt for arms race. In case of Pakistan, the best way for India is to engage it in an unnecessary arms race that would adversely impact its declining economy. Further, if India develops BMD and Pakistan does not, the deterrence threshold would be lowered and it may become difficult for Pakistan to effectively operationalize its 'First Use' nuclear doctrine. Moreover, it will not only allow India to strengthen its deterrence as compared to Pakistan but will also provide an opportunity for an offensive through conventional and nuclear strategies. Second, if Pakistan also looks towards developing a suitable BMD system, it will further stress it's state of economy. This double advantage to India will put an extra pressure on Pakistan, whereby it cannot put up matching response to India's designs by developing its own BMD. There are very scant options for Pakistan in the present strategic environment and it has to find its way out from the economic morass to meet the strategic challenges arising out of the Indian BMD. Therefore, strategic options for Pakistan to counter

India's BMD may generally be restricted to developing offensive strategies. Pakistan's range of options would include modernizing its space technology, focusing on its second-strike capability, MIRVs (Multiple Independent Targetable Re-entry Vehicles), developing cruise missiles, and looking at the geographical vulnerabilities of India.

## **Conclusion**

BMD as a strategy is a hazy concept. On the one hand, it has an element of deception in its portrayal as a defensive strategy but it is inherently offensive, giving leverage to the one who deploys it against the rival state. This has divided the world between the BMD "haves" and "have-nots", giving impetus to the have-nots to devise strategies to counter the leverage enjoyed by the BMD-endowed states. US's deployment of BMD for its own protection against any imminent missile threats may have less impact on the global security as compared to the impact of the Washington's decision to extend the BMD system to its allies. In fact, it has the potential to destabilize and cause imbalance in the regional security and stability matrix amongst the regional competitors to the detriment of regional peace in the long run. A case in point is India's deployment of BMD which will have far-reaching negative impact on peace and stability in South Asia. Pakistan would be left with no other option but to look for offensive strategies to restore the balance in regional stability and security ranging from employing Hatf series of cruise missiles and MIRVs (Multiple Independent Targetable Re-entry Vehicles) to other more offensive options, especially geared at enhancing its second-strike capability. These will possibly trigger a renewed arms race in the region, despite resource constraints which are the hallmark of any developing economy like Pakistan. For India, it will be a costly affair as it will require a major overhaul and advancement in its space program to ensure an impeccable missile defence system, specially the one supported by capability of boost-phase interception of incoming missile. At the moment, certainly it remains a distant possibility.

## WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN 13<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN: ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GENDER QUOTA

Mussarat Jabeen\* & Sher Muhammad\*\*

### Abstract

*Traditionally, patriarchal mindset has kept women away from politics, considering it a male domain, resulting in under-representation of women in legislatures. Observing disparities in these representations, the United Nations in various conferences (1975-1995) recommended one-third of seats for women as gender quota. Gender quotas have become an effective tool to enhance women's representation in legislative bodies throughout the world. In Pakistan, all the three constitutions reserved seats for women, but this provision lapsed in 1988. In 2002 it was restored with 17 percent quota in the parliament. The 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly elections turned in higher number of women in the house, raising an expectation that an increase in number of women would increase their voice in the decision-making bodies. The study analyzes the effects of a numerical increase of women representation in the National Assembly on inclusion of gender concerns in legislation, specifically on women issues. The available literature suggest although gender quota has increased in numbers, it has not influenced the legislation on women issues to an expected level. This study deploys critical mass theory and mix research method to examine the effectiveness of gender quota in Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** *Gender Quotas, Critical Mass Theory, Decision-Making Bodies, National Assembly, Women's Descriptive and Substantive Representation*

### Introduction

Gender-based discrimination is a worldwide phenomenon and is reflected in institutional policies, laws and practices whereas political inequality in terms of gender represents a significant issue. Women's

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underrepresentation in legislatures is the main cause of inequality in genders, along with other cultural and social disparities. Looking at the severity of the issue, the UN tried to address the issue of gender inequality, particularly under-representation in politics from its platform. It observed that the lower number of women in decision-making bodies was impeding social and economic development of women.<sup>1</sup>

From 1975-1995, the UN held four women conferences emphasising the need to increase female political representation. Recognizing gender inequality and discrimination in politics, the conferences recommended equal rights. They motivated gender activists and agents of civil society to work for removal of disparities and discrimination in politics. However, in this period, the percentage of women in parliaments (of world) increased only marginally 0.7 percent (10.9 to 11.6 percent) in lower houses, and decreased, (10.5 percent to 9.4 percent) in upper houses of legislatures.<sup>2</sup> In September 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, proved to be a turning point.<sup>3</sup> It called on the states to take necessary measures to ensure women's equal access of to power structures by setting the target of 30 percent in decision-making bodies. It identified 12 critical areas of action: women's concerns in poverty, education, health, economy, violence, shared decision making and more. The international community moved to make progress under this initiative and it had a significant impact on numerical strength of women in legislatures around the world. More than 100 democracies adopted gender quota, setting the standard and taking measures to substantially enhance women representation.<sup>4</sup> The UN also introduced Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in

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<sup>1</sup> Mussarat Jabeen & Sajid M. Awan, "Gender Quotas as an Instrument for Women's Empowerment in Legislatures," *FJWU Journal of Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (summer, 2017), 132; "Short History of CEDAW Convention," United Nations Department of Public Information, accessed on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Azza Karam, ed., *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (Stockholm: IDEA, 1998); Mussarat Jabeen & Sher Muhammad, "Electoral Gender Quotas in Pakistan: Including the Excluded, Empowering the Powerless," *NICE Research Journal* (2013), 2.

<sup>3</sup> The United Nations, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, *The Fourth World Conference on Women* (4-15 September, 1995), [https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing\\_Declaration\\_and\\_Platform\\_for\\_Action](https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action).

<sup>4</sup> Mona Lena Krook, *Quotas for Women in Politics: Gender and Candidate Selection Reform Worldwide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009): 5.

1979 to ensure equal fundamental rights to women.<sup>5</sup> Thus women quotas increased; today, they are an important tool to ensure access of women in legislature. Pursuing the quotas' policies, many countries have introduced electoral reforms to include women in policy-making.<sup>6</sup> In 2010, women had 19.2 percent representation in both houses of the world's legislatures.<sup>7</sup> After one decade, it is 25 percent and Rwanda has the highest number with 61.3 percent women in lower house as of January 2021.<sup>8</sup>

## Gender Quota and Women Representation

Gender quota is seen as an instrument for achieving significant increase in the level of women's representation in political institutions and a mechanism for securing their political interests in the legislatures. Quota determines a specific percentage or number for women, minorities or any previously excluded faction.<sup>9</sup> It generally ranges from 20 percent to 40 percent or depends on a state's policy. Women are not a 'numerical' minority, but a political minority.<sup>10</sup> The system of quota is influenced by recommendations of international organizations and cross-country inspiration, bringing a dramatic rise in number of women in legislatures. It is a fast-track strategy, unlike 'incremental track modeling,' which proposes that gender equality, occurs as a country develops.<sup>11</sup>

The Nordic countries are on the forefront in this regards. They have enhanced women's status in society by ratifying different resolutions, conventions and supporting the role of women in political parties and feminist organizations. However, women in these countries already have a higher representation in legislation, so the quotas bring a symbolic change.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Human Rights, Office of High Commissioner, "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979," accessed on February 3, 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Inter Parliamentary Union, 2010, <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=9&year=2010>

<sup>8</sup> Inter Parliamentary Union, 2021, <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=1&year=2021>

<sup>9</sup> Drude Dahlerup, "The Story of the Theory of Critical Mass," *Politics and Gender* 2, no. 4 (2006), 19.

<sup>10</sup> Mussarat Jabeen, "Gender Quotas: An Instrument for Political Empowerment of Women," in *Legislatures in New Opportunities and Impasses: Theorising and Experiencing Politics*, ed. E. Zeynep Güler (Istanbul: DAKAM Publishing, 2014, April).

<sup>11</sup> Drude Dahlerup, "Preface," in *The Impact of Gender Quotas* ed., Susan Franceschet, Mona Lena Krook & Jennifer M. Piscopo (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): vii-viii.

Norway was the first sovereign state, which provided partial vote-right to women because of a strong movement.<sup>12</sup> Before adoption of quotas, women in Norwegian Labour Party and Swedish Labour Party held more than 25 percent and 33 percent seats in the parliament respectively.<sup>13</sup> Asia had approximately 18 percent women in legislatures.<sup>14</sup> However, Central African country Rwanda has surpassed all other countries, having 63.8 percent of seats for women in the lower house and 38.5 in upper house while other African countries like Burundi, Ethiopia, Guyana, Tanzania and Cameroon have more than 33 percent women in legislatures as of January 2021.<sup>15</sup> Women's effective political participation is considered significant not only in terms of meaningful contribution to women empowerment, but also ensuring consideration of their views and concerns in all public policy matters.<sup>16</sup>

Three types of gender quotas are popular. First one is voluntary party quota, which binds political parties to choose female candidates for specific positions, to increase women's share in legislative bodies. In several countries, like Germany, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Argentina and Ecuador, a number of political parties have adopted this measure. All political parties do not choose gender quota. However, the overall representation of women increase if major parties adopt it, as the South African National Party did.<sup>17</sup> The second type is legislated candidate quota that, requires political parties to fix a specific number of positions for women. It is stipulated through party policy, electoral laws or constitutional provisions. Nepal, the Philippines and Uganda are pursuing this type of quota in their national parliaments under constitutional provisions whereas France, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Belgium and many Latin American countries are pursuing it through the electoral laws.<sup>18</sup> France and India are exercising it in local bodies.<sup>19</sup> This type is not

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<sup>12</sup> Jabeen and Awan, "Gender Quotas."

<sup>13</sup> Richard E. Matland, "The Norwegian Experience of Gender Quotas," A Paper presented at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)/CEE Network for Gender Issues Conference at Budapest, Hungary, October 22-23, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Jabeen & Awan, "Gender Quotas," 136.

<sup>15</sup> "Monthly Ranking of Women in National Parliaments," Parline-Global Data on National Parliaments, June 1, 2021, <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=6&year=2021>.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Political and Legislative Participation of Women: Issues and Perspectives*, (Islamabad: UNDP, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Drude Dahlerup, No Quota Fever in Europe, IDEA, October 2004, 5.

<sup>18</sup> IDEA, Gender Quotas Database, <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/quotas>.

producing desired results as the candidates' inclusion does not guarantee their success.<sup>20</sup> Finally, many states including Pakistan have reserved seats for women;<sup>21</sup> their arrangement originates from electoral laws and constitution.<sup>22</sup> Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, etc. have reserved seats for women. Despite their individual shortcomings, all these categories of representation are enabling women to secure their position in politics.<sup>23</sup>

## Literature Review

The literature reviewed analyzed the impact of quota on descriptive and substantive representation of women in parliament, considering women's political representation in Pakistani legislature. Generally, it is assumed that both men and women have the same political interests irrespective of their gender, but a survey conducted by Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 65 countries negates this idea. Almost 200 female parliamentarians were interviewed during the survey and the majority of respondents held different perceptions about politics and explained that women's participation in decision-making was crucial to change the political culture.<sup>24</sup>

Introducing the concept of critical mass, Kanter argues that 35 percent representation in female members could influence the legislation. She tried to establish that presence of a larger number of women in assemblies could influence gender issues.<sup>25</sup> The idea of critical mass was advocated widely to attain women's enhanced representation. It was assumed that once women would achieve a certain percentage in the legislature, change would occur automatically. Vega and Firestone observed if women are smaller in number, they take a back seat in decision-making.

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<sup>19</sup> IDEA, Gender Quotas Database. <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/146/35>

<sup>20</sup> Jabeen and Awan, "Gender Quotas."

<sup>21</sup> "Reserved Seats for Women," National Assembly of Pakistan, [http://www.na.gov.pk/en/mna\\_list\\_w.php?list=women](http://www.na.gov.pk/en/mna_list_w.php?list=women)

<sup>22</sup> Krook, *Quotas for Women*.

<sup>23</sup> Jabeen and Awan, "Gender Quotas."

<sup>24</sup> IPU, Women's insight, IPU Reports and Documents no.36, (Geneva: Inter Parliamentary Union, 2000).

<sup>25</sup> Kanter, "Some Effects."

<sup>26</sup> Lovenduski and Norris suggest that higher numbers in the parliament would empower women to work for their causes.<sup>27</sup>

However, the critical mass theory is not in itself sufficient as other factors contribute to change in both negative and positive ways. Women politicians argue that 'women parliamentarians seek to articulate women's issues in parliament and conduct politics in a gender sensitive way.'<sup>28</sup> Yoon and Bunwaree have examined the case of women parliamentarian in the Mauritian Parliament. Their study suggests that even a small number of women in the parliament can bring women's issues in the limelight.<sup>29</sup> Saint and Michelle's findings on the state legislature of Arizona indicate that in case of lower representation, men do not contradict with women on their issues. It was further argued that 15 percent or more seats occupied by women in the parliament can change the representation of gender issues.<sup>30</sup>

Anne Phillips's in 'Politics of Presence' argue that women's presence is important, but warns that gender parity does not guarantee addressing women's interests.<sup>31</sup> A study conducted in Taiwan indicated that male and female legislators have different priorities. It highlighted that women speak for their issues regardless of their party affiliation and agendas.<sup>32</sup> Another study examined the impact of gender in Thailand's Parliament during the rule of Prime Minister Thaksin. It confirmed the thesis that only women legislators brought change through the number of bills introduced and passed, concerning women's issues.<sup>33</sup> It was further

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<sup>26</sup> Arturo Vega & Juanita M. Firestone, "The Effects of Gender on Congressional Behavior and the Substantive Representation of Women," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (1995).

<sup>27</sup> Joni Lovenduski and Pippa Norris, "Westminster Women: The Politics of Presence," *Political Studies* 51, no. 1 (2003): 84-102.

<sup>28</sup> Sarah Childs, "The New Labour Women MPs in the 1997 British Parliament: Issues of Recruitment and Representation," *Women's History Review* 9, no.1 (2000): 70.

<sup>29</sup> Mi Yung Yoon and Sheila Bunwaree, "Women's Legislative Representation in Mauritius: A Grave Democratic Deficit," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 24, no. 2 (2006): 229-247.

<sup>30</sup> Saint-Germain & A. Michelle, "Does their Difference make a Difference? The Impact of Women on Public Policy in Arizona Legislature," (1989).

<sup>31</sup> Anne Phillips, *Idea of the Politics of Presence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

<sup>32</sup> Lichun Chiang and Kazuki Lwanaga, "Women as Agents of Change in Legislation in Taiwan," *Women's Political Participation and Representation in Asia: Obstacles and Challenges* (2008): 81-100.

<sup>33</sup> Kazuki Iwanaga, and Patricia Loreskär, "Women Legislators and their Impact on Public Policy: A Comparative Perspective," in Aazar Ayaz and Andrea Fleschenberg eds. *The Gender Face of Asian politics* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

indicated that party affiliation was more important for women legislators in Philippine in comparison to Taiwan.<sup>34</sup> A review of available literature reflects that sheer quantitative representation of women in legislatures is not sufficient as numbers intersect with other factors like party affiliation, electoral laws, constitutional provisions, etc.

### Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology

This study deploys the “critical mass,” theory to examine the impact of quota on women representation in the National Assembly of Pakistan. Though other studies claim that gauging representation through this perspective in all case studies does not show positive results, the purpose is to go beyond numbers or critical mass to assess the effects of gender quota in a specific context.<sup>35</sup> Dahlerup applied critical mass theory on a study of Nordic legislatures and affirmed that 30 percent representation of women in assemblies helped women representation .<sup>36</sup> In her view, moving up from a small percentage to a large minority is significant.<sup>37</sup> Her findings indicated that a lower percentage, made it difficult for women to prove their legitimacy of contribution due to patriarchal settings and to influence policies or represent their viewpoints effectively. Gender differences in legislative bills does not occur unless women occupy 15 to 30 percent seats.<sup>38</sup>

However, these perspectives are debatable. A major focus of enquiry, is the presence of women in terms of number for some time, considering if critical mass is relevant for women’s political representation.<sup>39</sup> Dahlerup also pointed out that number and percentages have slight importance for a viable policy outcome. Numbers alone are insufficient yet impactful and always must be considered in relation with several factors like literacy rate, societal norms, socio-economic development, political culture and equal access to resources.<sup>40</sup> Significantly,

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<sup>34</sup> Lourdes Veneracion-Rallonza, "Women and the Democracy Project: A Feminist Take on Women’s Political Participation in the Philippines," in Kazuki Iwanaga ed. *Women’s Political Participation and Representation in Asia: Obstacles and Challenges* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008).

<sup>35</sup> Susan Franceschet and J. Piscopo, “Gender Quotas and Women’s Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina,” *Politics and Gender* 4, 2008; Franceschet et al., “The Impact.”; Sarah Childs, *New Labour ’s Women MPs: Women Representing Women* (London: Routledge. 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Dahlerup, “From a Small.”

<sup>37</sup> “The Story,” 512.

<sup>38</sup> Saint-Germain & Michelle, “Does their Difference.”

<sup>39</sup> Childs, “New Labour.”

<sup>40</sup> Jabeen and Awan, “ Gender Quotas.”

the theory places undue burden on female legislators, holding them responsible of women's interest representation.

Applying the Critical Mass Theory on the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan, it was observed that numbers matter in case of Pakistan. Since, women representation was lower in all the three elections, held after the lapse of provision of reserved seats in 1988. Benazir Bhutto, the first woman prime minister in 1988, could not impact women's number visibly, though she took several steps including establishing women police stations (1994), a National Commission on Status of Women (1994) to review the prevailing laws and recommending amendments, sending a women delegation to Beijing Conference on Women (1995), ratification of CEDAW and appointment of several women on prominent positions. Critical actors are important as their active participation generates more results in comparison to critical mass. In case of this National Assembly, all female legislators are not active, but those who remain active participants have demonstrated exceptional performance even in comparison to their male colleagues.

The case study method is considered with in-depth, comprehensive and intensive inquiries of individuals, communities, groups and events. In this study, qualitative method is applied to understand the underlying causes, reasons, motivations and opinions, while quantitative method uses statistical data to quantify different opinions, attitudes or define variables. The primary data includes views of women politicians and gender activists, besides the proceedings of the National Assembly. Whereas the secondary sources include published material particularly reports of Free and Fair Elections Network (FAFEN), Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) and Aurat Foundation on the subject. PILDAT is a think tank, working on political and public policy, while FAFEN is a network of thirty-five domestic-level organizations working in collaboration to improve parliamentary and electoral processes. Aurat Foundation is a non-governmental organization working for women's rights.

## Women Representation in the Politics of Pakistan

During the British period in India, the demand for reserved women's seats was raised when Indians launched the Nationalist Movement in the 1920s. After the WWI, Indian nationalists protested for the demand of universal adult franchise and contesting elections.<sup>41</sup> The Government of India Act 1935, reserved seats for women along with other marginalized

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<sup>41</sup> Azra Asghar Ali, "The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women," (1920-1947), Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000; Mussarat Jabeen, "The Local Government System of Pakistan: Participation, Representation and Empowerment of Women," *Pakistan Perspectives*, 24, no.1, (2019, January-June):65-94.

segments of the population on the basis of creed, race, caste or occupation.<sup>42</sup> The basic idea was equality; Indian women organizations appraised the new policy of the British government. Pre-partition, Indian women became active not only in politics, but also participated in the freedom struggle. After the independence of Pakistan in 1947, the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah encouraged women to take part in state affairs, his own sister Fatima Jinnah stood next to him on all occasions. Her presence was a message to the people that women were not weaker or an ignored segment of the society.

After independence, no constitutional or legal bar restricted women's political participation but their representation in politics remained very low. All the three constitutions of 1956, 1962 and 1973 had the provision of reserved seats for women.<sup>43</sup> The gender quota provision lapsed in 1988 and in 1985 the seats reserved for women were doubled in the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment. In the general elections of 1997, women's representation was around 0.4 percent in all the four provincial assemblies, two percent in Senate and four percent in the National Assembly.<sup>44</sup> Keeping in view, this low level of women representation, the military regime of General Musharraf, restored gender quota and reserved 17 percent seats for women in national and provincial assemblies and allocated 33 percent quota for women in the local body system.<sup>45</sup> Next elections were held in 2002, and brought 205 women into the parliament and four provincial assemblies. This development pushed Pakistan much higher in the regional and international ranking of the GEM (Gender Empowerment Measurement). Pakistan secured 58<sup>th</sup> position in the GEM index of 102 countries even higher than the UK and the US. In 1999, it had 100<sup>th</sup> position.<sup>46</sup> After the 2008 elections, as for South Asia, Pakistan had the highest representation of women in the parliaments.<sup>47</sup> Following Table provides number of female members on reserved/general seats in the National Assembly of Pakistan:

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<sup>42</sup> Krook, *Quotas for Women*.

<sup>43</sup> Farida Shaheed, Asma Zia & Sohail Warraich, *Women in Politics: Participation and Representation in Pakistan with Update 1993-1997* (Shirkat Gah, 1998); Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, *Decade of Democracy in Pakistan (2008 - 2018)*, Islamabad: PILDAT, December, 2020.

<sup>44</sup> UNDP, *Political and Legislative*.

<sup>45</sup> "Legislative Quotas for Women A Global & South Asian Overview of Types and Numbers," Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, July, 2012, [https://www.af.org.pk/pub\\_files/1358744372.pdf](https://www.af.org.pk/pub_files/1358744372.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> Jabeen and Muhammad, "Electoral Gender."

<sup>47</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliament: World Classification, 2008*, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

**Table 1: Women Representation in the National Assembly of Pakistan (1947-2013)**

Legislature Years	Total Seats	Women Elected On General Seat	Women on Reserved Seats	Total Seats Held by Women	Percent age of Women Seats
1 <sup>st</sup> NA (1947-1954)	30	2	-	2	6.7%
2 <sup>nd</sup> NA (1955-1958)	80	-	-	0	0%
3 <sup>rd</sup> NA (1962-1965)	156	6	-	6	3.8%
4 <sup>th</sup> NA (1965-1969)	156	6	-	6	3.8%
5 <sup>th</sup> NA (1972-1977)	144	6	-	6	4.2%
6 <sup>th</sup> NA March 2 to July 05, 1977	210	1	10	11	5.2%
7 <sup>th</sup> NA (1985-1988)	217	1	21	22	10.1%
8 <sup>th</sup> NA (1988-1990)	217	4	20	24	11.1%
9 <sup>th</sup> NA (1990-1993)	217	2	-	2	0.9%
10 <sup>th</sup> NA (1993-1996)	217	4	-	4	1.8%
11 <sup>th</sup> NA (1997-1999)	217	6	-	6	2.8%
12 <sup>th</sup> NA (2002-2007)	342	13	61*	74	21.2%
13 <sup>th</sup> NA (2008-2013)	342	16	60	76	22.2%

\*One woman was elected on reserved seats for minorities.

Source: <http://www.na.gov.pk.com>.

### **Women's Contribution in Legislation during the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (2008-13)**

The general elections for the 13th National Assembly were held on February 18, 2008. These were the second elections after restoration and an increased number of reserved seats. Sixty women were elected on reserved seats while 16 won the general seats, constituting 22.2 percent share of the assembly.<sup>48</sup> After increased number of women in the parliament, it was expected that women-specific issues would be addressed because the male parliamentarians ignored them before 2002; they rarely introduced any women related bill to in the parliament.<sup>49</sup> The changing

<sup>48</sup> Reserved seats are filled through indirect elections and seats are distributed among the political parties in proportion to their position on elected seats. No physical constituency or voters' representation exist. Members on general seats are directly elected on a 'first past the post' basis by a single member constituency. The basic eligibility criterion is same for the two types as they must be Pakistani citizen, having age of 25 years or above, must be part of the voter list, qualifying the conditions, provided in Article 62 and 63 of the 1973 Constitution. The condition of graduation was removed by the 13<sup>th</sup> NA. Naeem Mirza and Wasim Wagha, "Performance of Women Parliamentarians in the 12th National Assembly," (2002-2007) (Lahore: Aurat Foundation Publication, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> Jabeen and Muhammad, "Gender Quotas."

situation brought women members together to work on raising gender-related agenda in the National Assembly. This act was not only to draw attention to public forums, but also helpful in advocacy of making these demands, a part of public policy. It was natural as increased number in the legislative bodies raised expectations and feelings of achievement. However, the success ratio was low in terms of laws, but a higher number of bills on women and social issues were initiated by female members in the house.

Total 50 sessions of the 13th National Assembly (2008-13) were held for 690 days to perform its basic duty of law-making and amending the existing one. The article 54(2) of 1973 Constitution of Pakistan restricts the House to meet not less than 130 days in a year, and three sessions must be held in one year.<sup>50</sup> In the first parliamentary year, the session of the NA met for 132 days, 136 days in the second year, 134 days in the third year and 144 days each during fourth and fifth parliamentary years.<sup>51</sup> However, the numbers of days when the NA met and worked were less than its total working days as Shah (2013) pointed out in her study, which provided data of the first three years; these days were 97, 104 and 104 respectively.<sup>52</sup>

The parliamentary business works under a code called 'Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business.' On one hand, this code helps in legislation; on the other, it provides an opportunity to intervene and talk on public issues.<sup>53</sup> This document is provided to all members after the oath-taking ceremony along with a copy of constitution. It equips them with knowledge of legislative interventions through different tools like Questions, Calling Attention Notices (CANs), Resolutions, Point of Order (POs), motions and parliamentary debates. These legislative interventions are helpful for the members to address the public concerns as well as accountability of ruling executive.<sup>54</sup> These tools are also important in terms of showing the interest and performance of the members to run the parliamentary affairs. Since the restoration of reserved seats, women members have been more active, vocal and vigilant, as compared to their male counterparts in exercising these tools.

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<sup>50</sup> Constitution of Pakistan 1973, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>

<sup>51</sup> Free and Fair Elections Network, "Five Years Performance of 13th National Assembly (2008-2013)," (Islamabad: FAFEN Publication, 2013), <https://fafen.org/five-years-performance-13th-national-assembly-pakistan-march-2008-march-2013/>

<sup>52</sup> Shaheen Ashraf Shah, *Women's Contested Politics of Presence: Learning from the Experiences of Pakistani Women Parliamentarians*, PhD Dissertation, Centre for the Study of Women and Gender, Department of Sociology University of Warwick, June 2013, <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/57732>.

<sup>53</sup> Mirza and Wagha, "Performance of Women," 26.

<sup>54</sup> Shah, "Women's Contested."

The record of previous assembly (2002-07) was not disappointing either as the most of the women parliamentarians were elected for the first time. They worked enthusiastically and took keen interest to learn the rules and their implementation. Their performance and roles were highly appreciated despite their marginalization. It was reported that in the 12<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (2002-07), only 17 male members (6.3 per cent) out of 269 stood by their female colleagues or individually initiated the bills of women's rights in the house. The attitude of women elected on general seats was the same. Amongst 25 active female members, only two were elected on general seats.<sup>55</sup>

**Following Table provides details of legislative interventions by the MNAs to control the working of the house:**

**Table 2: Performance of the 13<sup>th</sup> NA (2008-2013) in terms of Legislative Interventions**

Agenda Item	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	5 <sup>th</sup> Year	Total
Number of Sessions	11	9	9	11	10	50
Number of Sittings	100	107	108	106	100	521
Number of Treasury Bills introduced	16	22	20	17	27	102
Number of Private Bills Introduced	39	58	17	40	35	189
Number of Questions on Agenda	3,483	4,238	3,127	2,545	2,663	16,056
Number of resolutions adopted	16	14	12	9	34	85
Number of adjournment motions raised	6	10	8	5	1	30
Number of CANs on agenda	109	108	120	122	84	543
Number of points of order raised	741	1,002	1,239	1,289	828	5,099

Note: there is a bit difference in collected numbers as data varies from one to other source.

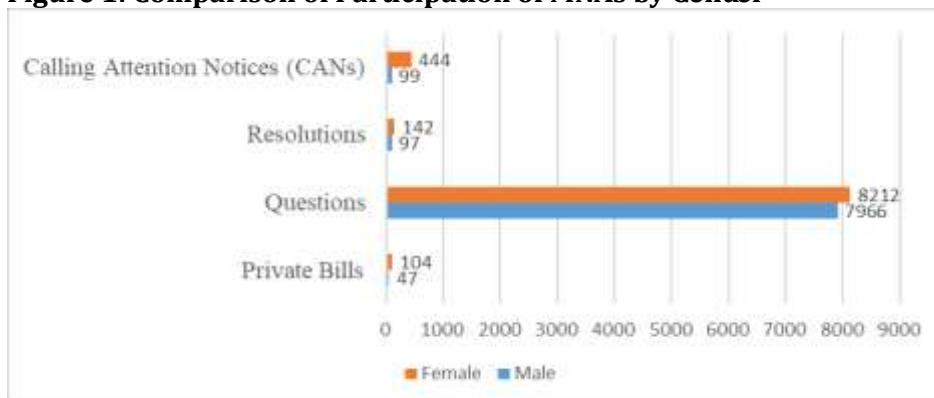
Source: <http://openparliament.pk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Performance-of-the-13th-National-Assembly.pdf>.

A gender review of data of 2008-13 shows active contribution of women in legislative business. Different categories provide a quantitative analysis of women representation. A brief gender-based description of

<sup>55</sup> Mirza and Wagha, "Performance of Women," 98.

various tools used by the MNAs for intervention in the working of the house (2008-13) is given below:

**Figure 1: Comparison of Participation of MNAs by Gender**



Source: "Performance of the 13th National Assembly (2008-2013)," FAFEN, <http://openparliament.pk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Performance-of-the-13th-National-Assembly.pdf>

## Discussion and Findings

During the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (2008-13), women's performance was better. A total 16,178 questions were raised in the house during the five-year term out of which 8,212 (51 percent) were raised by women. Out of 76, 55 women legislators put forward these questions whereas 162 out of 263 male members put 7,966 questions. Members on minority seats submitted 234 questions. Female member had an average of 148 questions, whereas male members' average was 49. This indicates that women have been more active and vigilant regarding the performance of official institutions.

Calling Attention Notices (CANs) are a key tool to draw the attention of members on the assembly's floor toward any crucial issue. Total 573 CANs were tabled and 82 percent were introduced by females and one was related to minorities' rights. The total number of Resolutions were 243, which were tabled on various public issues, while 85 (16 percent) were adopted. Women authored 142 (59.4 percent) of the moved Resolutions. Another encouraging aspect was the 53 joint resolutions by males and females. The NA passed six resolutions on women's issues and one each on blasphemy and minorities' rights. Mostly resolutions focused on foreign affairs, religion, land-reforms, missing persons, target killings and terrorism while social issues like price-control, unemployment, poor children and gender inequality were also highlighted through resolutions.<sup>56</sup> Shah (2013) explored that there was a remarkable difference in the

<sup>56</sup> PILDAT, Decade of Democracy, 43.

patterns of resolutions, especially those moved individually by male or female members from 2008-11.<sup>57</sup> Female members mainly raised social issues through resolution in the parliament.

The Rule 259 of the NA's procedure, allows the members and ministers to give a notice of motion for consideration of any matter of public importance like policy, statement or other relevant issue. During the 13<sup>th</sup> NA, total 318 motions were moved under this rule by 94 members and 47 were taken up. Among these members, 34 (36 percent) were women lawmakers.<sup>58</sup> A total of 5,099 Point of Orders were raised, which did not contribute to any output of assembly.<sup>59</sup>

Table 2 shows that women MNAs actively participated in legislative interventions as compared to men. Aurat Foundation's FAFEN reports endorsed women's dedication, purpose-oriented role and persistence despite their limited experience of parliamentary affairs. Only eight percent of legislative interventions were made by women elected on general seats. Another point was passive role of 23 legislators, who did not show interest in contributing to parliamentary business and five of them were women. It was also reported that each year about 70 percent questions were not answered by concerned departments and ministries.<sup>60</sup> Under the rule 88 (Chapter XI) of the code (Procedure and Conduct of Business) of the assembly, "a member may call the attention of a minister to any matter of urgent public importance and the minister may make a brief statement or ask for time to make a statement. It is also provided that no member shall give more than one such notice in a sitting."<sup>61</sup> PILDAT report showed serious concerns, highlighting the significance of an effective system to collect questions and getting answers from concerned ministries, otherwise the interest of public's representatives in proceedings of the assembly would decline and the task of monitoring the performance of executive would be not done efficiently.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Shah, Women's Contested.

<sup>58</sup> PILDAT, Decade of Democracy, 48.

<sup>59</sup> FAFEN, Five Years Performance.

<sup>60</sup> PILDAT, Decade of Democracy; FAFEN, Five Years.

<sup>61</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan, Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2010, [http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/publications/rules\\_procedure.pdf](http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/publications/rules_procedure.pdf).

<sup>62</sup> PILDAT, Citizens' Report: Performance of the 3rd Parliamentary Year; 13th NA of Pakistan (Islamabad: PILDAT, 2011), 11.

**Figure 2: Legislation output of the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (2008-13).**

Parliamentary Year	Government Bill Passed	Private Members' Bill Passed	Total
1st Parliamentary Year	4	1	5
2nd Parliamentary Year	29	3	32
3rd Parliamentary Year	30	2	32
4th Parliamentary Year	25	4	30
5th Parliamentary Year	28	9	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>135</b>

Source: "Performance of the 13th National Assembly (2008-2013)," FAFEN, <http://openparliament.pk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Performance-of-the-13th-National-Assembly.pdf>

The basic task of parliament is legislation, and its performance is measured in terms of bills submitted and passed. Not all the bills are processed and accepted. For instance, in the 13<sup>th</sup> NA, 135 bills were passed (116 government and 19 private members bills) in its 5-year tenure. However, 81 became the acts of parliament. Out of total 116 government bills, four (3 percent) were introduced by women. Out of 19 PMBs, women introduced 15 (80 percent). The main focus of these bills was the government services, education, electoral laws, end of discretionary quotas in public housing schemes, domestic violence against women including acid throwing events and prohibition of anti-women practices.

Women introduced 104 (55 percent) of total 189 PMBs while 38 (20 percent) were joint venture in collaboration with male colleagues. Overall women's share in passed PMBs was 80 percent, which showed their interest and devotion towards the legislative output; but their share in the treasury passed bills was three percent, which was lower in comparison to 22 percent representation in the NA and constituting half of the population of Pakistan.<sup>63</sup> It is evident that in patriarchal setting male members were accommodated in the legislative business. Following bills were tabled and passed:

1. The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010
2. The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill 2010
3. The Criminal Law (Third Amendment) Bill 2010
4. Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act, 2010
5. The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act, 2011
6. Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2011
7. Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2011

<sup>63</sup> FAFEN, *Five Years*, 5.

## 8. National Commission on the Status of Women Bill, 2012

The passing of eight bills show that the years 2008 to 2013 (13<sup>th</sup> NA) tried to address anti-women practices. Women members worked actively for introducing pro-women bills, specifically covering areas like domestic violence and harassment. Women contributed with full strength and worked as critical actors in this period. Two bills were passed on gender rights, pursuing the international tradition and as a party to CEDAW. One was to provide protection at workplace from harassment. The Act made it mandatory for public and private institutions to introduce an internal code of conduct to avoid the happenings of sexual harassment at workplace.

It encouraged more women to be part of workforce, contributing to the economy of the country. The other bill, Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Bill (Criminal Law Amendments) declared many customs illegal such as marriage of women with the Holy Quran or handing over a female to settle the disputes, forced marriages and depriving women of inherited property. Gender-based violence was also addressed through the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act. This Act prevents the import, production, sale, storage and use of acid to control its misuse for heinous crimes. It also demands from the State to provide legal protection to both victims and survivors of acid and burn crimes.<sup>64</sup> Broadly, these laws exhibited Pakistan's commitment and endorsement to international law, treaties and conventions. Other bills also addressed sectarianism and custody of minor children, prohibiting the discriminatory practices and elevating women's status through the formation of commissions on status of women.<sup>65</sup> The image of the assembly improved due to its pro-women legislation.

On balance, the number of passed laws was much higher than the 12<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, which passed 50 out of 222 bills/ordinances during its 5-year term and 38 became Acts whereas 180 remained pending while eleven were withdrawn.<sup>66</sup> A significant improvement with positive change was visible in case of the 13<sup>th</sup> NA, making its performance as one of the best assemblies in terms of its legislative contribution.<sup>67</sup>

Here worth mentioning point is active role of quota women for drafting and submitting the bills. About 70 percent of PMBs were sponsored by female members and they initiated 104 bills in comparison to 47 by male members. Overall women's sponsored bills were 77 while 27 were presented by a group of female members. It is further observed that female members do not just focus on gender-related legislation, but cover a

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<sup>64</sup> PILDAT, Decade of Democracy.

<sup>65</sup> FAFEN, *Five Years*, 5.

<sup>66</sup> Mirza and Wagha, "Performance of Women," 26.

<sup>67</sup> F AFEN, *Five Years*, 2.

wide array of issues in the parliament. They contributed in diverse debates and discussions regarding national and international affairs. They exhibited strong unity and solidarity towards women-specific legislation even above their party affiliation. They constituted a Women's Parliamentary Caucus. Another cross-party consensus was demonstrated for an amendment to Political Parties Order 2000 and an increase in gender quota to 33 percent in the parliament. Indirect mode of election and selection stigmatized women's position and without constituency, even their uphill tasks were not reaping any positive outcome as no voters were to appreciate their performance or raise slogans in their favour. Gender quota in itself was insufficient for substantive representation.<sup>68</sup> A great achievement of this assembly was the 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment, which not only brought the system on parliamentary track, but also provided provincial autonomy, addressing the grievances of provinces. It also removed Article 58-2(b), curtailing the presidential powers to dissolve the legislature.

## **Conclusion**

Women's representation in 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly was descriptive as well as substantive. Women were beneficiary of restoration and increase in number if of reserved seats. Critical Mass worked and women succeeded in ensuring their presence and share in parliamentary affairs. They had two types of identity in the legislature: quota and general seats. Quota seats were never utilized to work for women's issue only as parties' selection is either to oblige the influential political families or women with feudal background or some other compromise. This choice never allows women to work independently as they are indebted to parties and families, pursuing party policy or observing their feudal or tribal traditions, where women have a subordinate status.

However, in the 13<sup>th</sup> legislature, majority of the women members tried to work beyond these restrictions and succeeded in bringing a visible change. Their presence and active participation in legislation rejected the concept that politics is a male domain. Viewing the parliamentary proceedings, it is explored that women legislators were very active and contributed a lot through legislative interventions like resolutions, CANs, PMBs, questions etc. In comparison to their male colleagues, they worked much more for women-related issue and tried to legislate on crucial themes as two bills were passed against domestic violence and harassment at work place. Their percentage for raising social issues was higher than male colleagues and they submitted 80 percent of PMBs and total passed PMBs

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<sup>68</sup> FAFEN, "Annual Appraisal of the 13th National Assembly; Third Parliamentary Year (March 2010 to March 2011)," (Islamabad: Free and Fair Elections Network, 2011).

were 19 and women introduced 15 of the passed bills. The same trend was visible in non-passed PMBs, they introduced 104 individually and 38 jointly out of 189 bills. They succeeded in making their presence, proving the argument if women have 20 to 30 percent (critical mass) representations in a parliament, there would be women prone legislation.

Apart from parliament, this number helped women change the public perception, exhibiting their performance on other forums. Women politicians successfully depicted seen as public representatives. However, a large number of government bills introduced by female members were lost in the initial stages. Total passed government bills were 116 and women introduced only three. Same trend was observed in non-passed official bills and out of 102 bills, women submitted six bills only. Legislation on women-specific issues was not according to the expectations, which were much higher in the presence of a female speaker.

Absence of constituencies made their position weaker and sometimes awkward, while on the other hand, majority of the women elected on general seats had nominal engagement in their constituencies due to traditional environment. In overall view, statistics revealed women's active participation and they became part of the process, showing a descriptive change. It was a positive sign and indicates that women demonstrated substantial activity within parliament and substantive representation in the process despite the males' domination of legislation. It was also viewed that some quota women were more active than others, and they contributed as they wanted to secure their position not only for next elections, but also to promote the cause of gender equality, showing their performance and abilities in this regard.

## THE EFFECT OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPABILITIES ON ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING IN PAKISTAN

Nasir Mehmood\*, Ikram Ahmad\*\* & Sadia Saeed\*\*\*

### Abstract

*The higher education institutions in Pakistan need to effectively utilize their capabilities to enhance organizational learning through IT-based infrastructure. This study examines the direct and indirect effects of knowledge management infrastructure and capabilities on organizational learning. To test the hypothesized relationships, data was collected from 250 respondents based on convenient sampling technique. The partial least square (PLS) structural equation modeling technique was applied for testing of hypotheses. The results revealed that IT-based knowledge management infrastructure is significantly related to organizational learning directly and through knowledge management capabilities. The study findings reinforced the need for the development of IT infrastructure in the service sector to enhance organizational learning.*

**Keywords:** *Knowledge Management, Infrastructure, Capability, Organizational Learning*

### Introduction

The concept of knowledge management has been in the limelight for the last two decades. The implications of a sound knowledge management infrastructure are imperative for the education sector as organizations use these capabilities to perk up the quality of the education system and organizational performance.<sup>1</sup> A similar effect on the

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<sup>1</sup> Heeseok Lee, Byounggu Choi, "Knowledge Management Enablers, Processes, and Organizational Performance: An Integrative View and Empirical Examination," *Journal of Management Information Systems* 20, no. 1 (2003): 200.

effectiveness of schools in Taiwan was found due to a rapid change in educational trends as higher education institutions face difficulties all over the world.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the present study recognizes that knowledge management is vital to an increase in learning capabilities which benefit higher education institutes.<sup>3</sup>

Based on the knowledge-based view, knowledge management is a critical resource that supports an organization to gain more value.<sup>4</sup> This approach has gained more importance due to increasing global competition which is persistently calling to adopt participative approaches to improve organizational learning abilities.<sup>5</sup> The higher education sector is facing complex challenges for achieving objectives and sustainable competitive advantages all over the world.<sup>6</sup> During the knowledge management implementation process, both IT based infrastructure as well as capabilities become essential. Thus, effectiveness of managing and sharing knowledge not only develops the learning abilities of an organization but also assists in gaining a competitive advantage.<sup>7</sup>

Organizations need to establish a strong system to effectively and efficiently maintain and store useful knowledge that facilitates organizations to enhance their knowledge management capabilities.<sup>8</sup> Past studies have extensively acknowledged the relationship of knowledge

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<sup>2</sup> Ammar Zwain, Kong Teong Lim, and Siti Norezam Othman, "Knowledge Management Processes And Academic Performance in Iraqi HEIs: An Empirical Investigation," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 2, no. 6 (2012): 273.

<sup>3</sup> R. Jamil, Maleeha Lodhi, "Role of Knowledge Management Practices for Escalating Universities' Performance in Pakistan," *Management Science Letters* 5, no. 10 (2015): 950.

<sup>4</sup> Rajiv Sabherwal, Sanjiv Sabherwal, "How do Knowledge Management Announcements Affect Firm Value? A Study of Firms Pursuing Different Business Strategies," *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management* 543 (2007): 413.

<sup>5</sup> Stefano Bresciani, Alberto Ferraris, Gabriele Santoro, and Heidi R. Nilsen. "Wine Sector: Companies' Performance And Green Economy as a Means of Societal Marketing," *Journal of Promotion Management* 22, no. 2 (2016): 252.

<sup>6</sup> F.M. Arouet, "Competitive Advantage and the New Higher Education Regime," *Entelequia. Revista Interdisciplinar* 10, (2009): 25.

<sup>7</sup> Cong Qi, Patrick Y. K Chau, "Will Enterprise Social Networking Systems Promote Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning? An Empirical Study," *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce* 28, no. 1 (2018): 45.

<sup>8</sup> Rajiv Sabherwal, Sanjiv Sabherwal, "How do Knowledge Management Announcements Affect Firm Value? A Study of Firms Pursuing Different Business Strategies," *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management* 543 (2007): 413.

management with innovation<sup>9</sup> as the former effectively manages employee knowledge and also efficiently creates valuable information among employees which increases the innovation process.<sup>10</sup> Thus, it is considered a leading strategy used by various industries to enhance organizational performance.<sup>11</sup>

Recently, most studies explored the importance of the knowledge management process in service sector.<sup>12</sup> However, this needs to be further explored in different contextual and organizational settings within the Pakistani educational institutes.<sup>13</sup> This is especially imperative for developing economies like Pakistan and to indicate measures for improving the performance of the Pakistani higher institutes.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, there has been a necessity for a strong system to use knowledge effectively in order to improve organizational learning capacity.<sup>15</sup> Academic organizations gradually establish a robust IT based infrastructure to enhance learning capability.<sup>16</sup> IT-based knowledge management has significantly escalated the performance of the

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<sup>9</sup> Patricia Yin Yin Lau, Gary N. McLean, Yen-Chen Hsu, Bella Ya-Hui Lien, "Learning Organization, Organizational Culture, And Affective Commitment In Malaysia: A Person-Organization Fit Theory," *Human Resource Development International* 20, no. 2 (2017): 170.

<sup>10</sup> Satyendra Singh, Yolande E Chan, and James D McKeen, "Knowledge Management Capability and Organizational Performance: A Theoretical Foundation," *Conference Paper at the University of Warwick, Coventry* (20 - 22 March 2006): 12.

<sup>11</sup> Ra'ed Masa'deh, Rifat Shannak, Mahmoud Maqableh, and Ali Tarhini, "The Impact Of Knowledge Management on Job Performance in Higher Education: The Case of the University of Jordan," *Journal of Enterprise Information Management* 30, no. 2 (2017): 248.

<sup>12</sup> Cong Qi, Patrick Y. K Chau, "Will Enterprise Social Networking Systems Promote Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning? An Empirical Study," *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce* 28, no. 1 (2018): 45.

<sup>13</sup> R. Jamil, Maleeha Lodhi, "Role of Knowledge Management Practices for Escalating Universities' Performance in Pakistan," *Management Science Letters* 5, no. 10 (2015): 950.

<sup>14</sup> R. Jamil, Maleeha Lodhi, "Role of Knowledge Management Practices for Escalating Universities' Performance in Pakistan," *Management Science Letters* 5, no. 10 (2015): 954.

<sup>15</sup> Rajiv Sabherwal, Sanjiv Sabherwal, "How Do Knowledge Management Announcements Affect Firm Value? A Study of Firms Pursuing Different Business Strategies," *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management* 543 (2007): 413.

<sup>16</sup> Rehmat Shah, Asad Abbas Rizvi, and Nabi Bux Jumani, "Status of Knowledge Management Practices in Pakistani Universities," *International Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Learning (IJITL)* 4, no. 2 (2019): 62.

universities and also permitted them to manage special knowledge.<sup>17</sup> It also helped mutual knowledge transmission between an institution and its students.<sup>18</sup> Firms nowadays devote considerable attention to establish such a system to utilize intangible resources (e.g. human & intellectual capital) just like tangible resources, for gaining a sustainable competitive advantage.<sup>19</sup>

In the current competitive environment for Pakistani higher education institutions, developing knowledge management infrastructure has become vital to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. It effectively summarizes complex knowledge in order to obtain desired outcomes and to develop unique capabilities for improving organizational learning.<sup>20</sup> Recent similar studies have also identified a set of unique characteristics of the knowledge management process and its implication in Spain<sup>21</sup> Malaysia<sup>22</sup> and Jordan.<sup>23</sup> As organizations need to be competitive by

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<sup>17</sup> A. Fidalgo-Blanco, M. L. Sein-Echaluce, F. J. García-Peñalvo, "Knowledge Spirals in Higher Education Teaching Innovation," *International Journal of Knowledge Management (IJKM)* 10, no. 4 (2014): 19.

<sup>18</sup> A. Fidalgo-Blanco, M. L. Sein-Echaluce, F. García-Peñalvo, "Epistemological and Ontological Spirals: From Individual Experience in Educational Innovation to the Organisational Knowledge in the University Sector," *Program* 49, no. 3 (2015): 270.

<sup>19</sup> Bader Yousef Obeidat, Mai Maher Al-Suradi, Ra'ed Masa'deh, and Ali Tarhini, "The Impact of Knowledge Management on Innovation: An Empirical Study on Jordanian Consultancy Firms," *Management Research Review* 39, no. 10 (2016): 1220.

<sup>20</sup> T. Andreeva, & A. Kianto, "Does Knowledge Management Really Matter? Linking Knowledge Management Practices, Competitiveness and Economic Performance," *Journal of Knowledge Management* 16, no. 4 (2012): 621; Ra'ed Masa'deh, Mahmoud Maqableh, and Huda Karajeh, "A Theoretical Perspective on the Relationship between Leadership Development, Knowledge Management Capability, and Firm Performance," *Asian Social Science*, 10, no. 6 (2014): 128; Bader Yousef Obeidat, Ra'ed (Moh'd Taisir) Masa'deh, and Ayman Bahjat Abdallah, "The Relationships among Human Resource Management Practices, Organizational Commitment, and Knowledge Management Processes: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach," *International Journal of Business and Management* 9, no. 3 (2014): 4.

<sup>21</sup> Lucía Muñoz-Pascual, Jesús Galende, "The Impact of Knowledge and Motivation Management on Creativity: Employees of Innovative Spanish Companies," *Employee Relations* 39, no. 5 (2017): 740.

<sup>22</sup> Patricia Yin Yin Lau, Gary N. McLean, Yen-Chen Hsu, Bella Ya-Hui Lien, "Learning Organization, Organizational Culture, and Affective Commitment in Malaysia: A Person Organization Fit Theory," *Human Resource Development International* 20, no. 2 (2017): 170.

<sup>23</sup> Ra'ed Masa'deh, Rifat Shannak, Mahmoud Maqableh, and Ali Tarhini, "The Impact of Knowledge Management on Job Performance in Higher Education: The case of the University of Jordan," *Journal of Enterprise Information Management* 30, no. 2 (2017): 248.

successfully creating, acquiring, disseminating and storing useful knowledge to achieve long term economic advantages and improve organizational learning.<sup>24</sup> As organizations now understand that through an effective IT-based infrastructure for knowledge management in place, they can win a competition by successfully creating, acquiring, disseminating and storing useful knowledge to achieve long term economic advantages and improve organizational learning.<sup>25</sup> Thus, this study identifies an intense need to establish empirical evidence based on similar lines that effective knowledge management infrastructure and capabilities are absolutely essential to achieve organizational competitiveness and quality of learning for the higher education sector of Pakistan.<sup>26</sup>

## Literature Review

### Knowledge Management IT Infrastructure (KMIT) and Knowledge Management Capabilities (KMC)

Knowledge-based infrastructure in past studies<sup>27</sup> predominantly emphasized the importance of knowledge management processes in different organizational contexts and settings. Yet organizations struggle to combine the KM process with technological structure and network systems to manage the flow of information.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, KMIT is highly instigative as it develops unique competitive abilities of an organization.<sup>29</sup> Previously, knowledge management capabilities were found to be an essential ingredient of the process that assists organizations to manage

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<sup>24</sup> A. Fidalgo-Blanco, M. L. Sein-Echaluce, F. J. García-Peñalvo, "Knowledge Spirals in Higher Education Teaching Innovation," *International Journal of Knowledge Management (IJKM)* 10, no. 4 (2014): 19; R. Jamil, Maleeha Lodhi, "Role of Knowledge Management Practices for Escalating Universities' Performance in Pakistan," *Management Science Letters* 5, no. 10 (2015): 957.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Rehmat Shah, Asad Abbas Rizvi, and Nabi Bux Jumani, "Status of Knowledge Management Practices in Pakistani Universities," *International Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Learning (IJITL)* 4, no. 2 (2019): 62.

<sup>27</sup> Jelena Rašula, Vesna Bosilj Vukšić, and Mojca Indihar Štemberger, "The Impact of Knowledge Management on Organisational Performance," *Economic & Business Review* 14, no. 2 (2012): 150; Kuan Yew Wong, Li Pin Tan, Cheng Sheng Lee, and Wong, W. P. , "Knowledge Management Performance Measurement: Measures, Approaches, Trends And Future Directions," *Information Development* 31, no. 3 (2015): 241.

<sup>28</sup> Michael H Zack, "Developing a Knowledge Strategy," *California Management Review* 41, no. 3 (April 1999): 125.

<sup>29</sup> Ra'ed Masa'deh, Rifat Shannak, Mahmoud Maqableh, and Ali Tarhini, "The impact of knowledge management on job performance in higher education: The case of the University of Jordan," *Journal of Enterprise Information Management* 30, no. 2 (2017): 249.

specialized knowledge.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, higher education institutions need to build a knowledge management infrastructure where employees can easily share and generate novel ideas for organizations in order to enhance their business value.<sup>31</sup>

KMC is vital for gaining sustainable competitive advantage through the effective utilization of specialized knowledge.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, it also significantly strengthens organization's competitiveness via generating new information from various knowledge resources.<sup>33</sup> Bose (2003)<sup>34</sup> argued that KMC improves the learning capacity of organizations by efficiently handling internal and external information. It protects an organization from external threats and makes them capable to compete in a dynamic and unstable environment.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, KMC is a complementary element for gaining competitive advantage that equips an organization with product knowledge.<sup>36</sup> It is believed that KMC enhances the organizational capacity to utilize various knowledge based resources (human intellect) and removes all barriers to knowledge sharing process<sup>37</sup> Such as Mao *et al.*,

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<sup>30</sup> Heeseok Lee, Byounggu Choi, "Knowledge Management Enablers, Processes, and Organizational Performance: An Integrative View and Empirical Examination," *Journal of Management Information Systems* 20, no. 1 (2003): 200; Hüseyin Tanriverdi, "Information Technology Relatedness, Knowledge Management Capability, and Performance of Multibusiness Firms," *Mis Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2005): 322.

<sup>31</sup> Hongyi Mao, Shan Liu, Jinlong Zhang, and Zhaohua Deng, "Information Technology Resource, Knowledge Management Capability, and Competitive Advantage: The Moderating Role of Resource Commitment," *International Journal of Information Management* 36, no.6 (2016): 1068.

<sup>32</sup> Sundar G. Bharadwaj, P. Rajan Varadarajan and John Fahy, "Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Service Industries: a Conceptual Model and Research Propositions," *Journal of Marketing* 57, no. 4 (1993): 88.

<sup>33</sup> S.-H. Chuang, "A Resource-Based Perspective on Knowledge Management Capability and Competitive Advantage: An Empirical Investigation," *Expert Systems With Applications* 27, no. 3 (2004): 460.

<sup>34</sup> Ranjit Bose, "Knowledge Management-Enabled Health Care Management Systems: Capabilities, Infrastructure, and Decision-Support," *Expert Systems with Applications* 24, no.1 (2003): 60.

<sup>35</sup> R.S. Sohi, "Leveraging Partner Relationships to Enhance Organizational Learning," Paper presented at the 4th International Marketing Conference Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, December 22-24, 2016, 43.

<sup>36</sup> S. H. Chuang, "A Resource-Based Perspective on Knowledge Management Capability and Competitive Advantage: An Empirical Investigation."

<sup>37</sup> Yang Chen, Yi Wang, Saggi Nevo, Jiafei Jin, Luning Wang, Wing S. Chow, "IT Capability and Organizational Performance: The Roles of Business Process Agility and Environmental Factors," *European Journal of Information Systems* 23, no. 3 (2014): 330; N. Melville, K. Kraemer, and V. Gurbaxani, "Information Technology and Organizational Performance: An Integrative Model of IT Business Value," *MIS Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2004): 288.

(2016)<sup>38</sup> revealed that KMIT is a significant positive determinant of KMC in power, IT and finance sectors. Similarly, Hung<sup>39</sup> reported KM as a positive predictor of KMC while comparing two medical centers.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the present study tested the following hypothesis:

*H<sub>1</sub>: KMIT is significantly related to KMC*

### **Knowledge Management IT Infrastructure (KMIT) and Organizational Learning (OL)**

The organizations must build KMIT networks to gain efficiencies. Knowledge management is also a key element of an organization that increases business value and creates a positive impact on organizational effectiveness.<sup>41</sup> Knowledge management infrastructure is considered an organizational asset that increases business value and creates a positive impact on organizational effectiveness.<sup>42</sup> The organizations need to build KMI networks because it provides a suitable environment to gain the cost-effective advantage. In addition, KMI also facilitates the knowledge management process which increases the organization's efficiency through enhancing their learning abilities.<sup>43</sup> Recent studies introduced the concept of KM in the educational sector of Pakistan. Higher educational institutions of Pakistan are not only improving the quality of education and research abilities but also working successfully to strengthen the economy of Pakistan.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Hongyi Mao, Shan Liu, Jinlong Zhang, and Zhaohua Deng, "Information Technology Resource, Knowledge Management Capability, and Competitive Advantage: The Moderating Role of Resource Commitment," *International Journal of Information Management* 36, no. 6 (2016): 1068.

<sup>39</sup> S.-Y. Hung, J. Tsai, W. Lee, and P. Y. Chau, "Knowledge Management Implementation, Business Process, and Market Relationship Outcomes: An Empirical Study," *Information Technology & People* 28, no. 3 (2015): 500.

<sup>40</sup> Annette M. Mills, Trevor A. Smith, "Knowledge Management and Organizational Performance: a Decomposed View," *Journal of Knowledge Management* 15, no. 1 (2011): 160.

<sup>41</sup> I. Beccerra-Fernandez, A. Gonzalez, A., and R. Sabherwal, "Knowledge Management: Challenges, Solutions and Technologies: Pearson Prentice Hall," Upper Saddle River, NJ. (2004), 76.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 77.

<sup>43</sup> Christoph Lattemann, Soren Kupke, Stefan Stieglitz, Marc Fetscherin, "The Governance Of Virtual Corporations," *The Journal of E-Business* VI, no. 2 (2006): 58.

<sup>44</sup> W Abbas, Ahmed, Khalid, & Yasmeen, "Analyzing the Factors that can Limit The Acceptability to Introduce New Specializations in Higher Education Institutions: A Case Study of Higher Education Institutions of Southern Punjab, Pakistan," *International Journal of Educational Management* 31, no. 4 (2017): 530.

In this regard, IT-based knowledge management infrastructure (KMIT) is one of the important dimensions of KMIT that significantly influences various organizational features such as creativity, learning, competitiveness and innovation.<sup>45</sup> KM-IT-based Infrastructure mainly includes IT resources, IT human resources and IT relationship resources. IT resource symbolizes those resources that provide technological orientation to an organization, IT human resource represents managerial, technical skills and IT relationship resource syndicates different business units that assist an organization to share risk.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, by establishing the proper KMIT, organizations can develop cross-unit knowledge synergies through sharing, transferring and storing knowledge among different business units that improve organizational learning process.<sup>47</sup> Organizational learning is vital for human, economic, social, political and technological development through maintaining and utilizing organizational knowledge management capabilities.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the present study hypothesized that:

*H<sub>2</sub>: KMIT is significantly related to OL*

### **Knowledge Management Capabilities (KMC) and Organizational Learning (OL)**

KMC effectively absorbs both, scientific and technological knowledge that improves the organization's learning process.<sup>49</sup> As such, KMC is an organizational ability that is used for the integration of knowledge resources from different components of a business.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, organizational learning refers to enhancement of learning

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<sup>45</sup> Hongyi Mao, Shan Liu, Jinlong Zhang, and Zhaohua Deng, "Information Technology Resource, Knowledge Management Capability, and Competitive Advantage: The Moderating Role Of Resource Commitment," *International Journal of Information Management* 36, no. 6 (2016): 1071.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 1069.

<sup>47</sup> Sue Young Choi, Heeseok Lee and Youngjin Yoo, "The impact of information technology and transactive memory systems on knowledge sharing, application, and team performance: a field study," *MIS quarterly* 34, 4 (2010):860; Clyde W. Holsapple, "The Inseparability of Modern Knowledge Management and Computer-Based Technology," *Journal of Knowledge Management* 9, (2005): 48.

<sup>48</sup> S. Ghavifekr, R. B. Jani, H. B. B. Kenayathulla, "Gender and Employability in Higher Learning Institutions in Malaysia: Implication for Leadership and Policy," *People: International Journal of Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (2016): 65.

<sup>49</sup> J. A Aragón-Correa, García-Morales, and Cordón-Pozo, "Leadership and Organizational Learning's Role on Innovation and Performance: Lesson from Spain," *Industrial Marketing Management* 36, no. 3 (2007): 349.

<sup>50</sup> Hüseyin Tanriverdi, "Information Technology Relatedness, Knowledge Management Capability, and Performance of Multibusiness Firms," *Mis Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2005): 324.

capabilities and competencies by sharing and storing knowledge.<sup>51</sup> KMC supports organizations to achieve better performance that encourages an organization to develop unique capacities for gaining sustainable competitive advantage.<sup>52</sup> That is why organizations are more focused to build knowledge management infrastructure and improving the efficiency of the education sector through remarkable utilization of organizational capabilities.<sup>53</sup>

Previously, Tsai<sup>54</sup> emphasized that organizational learning ability is strengthened by improving knowledge absorption capacity through which external knowledge is acquired to create organizational differentiation. On the other hand, organizations use learning process as a business strategy for achieving the desired outcomes since learning process facilitates an organization to acquire, create and retain human knowledge and develop new skills so as to meet market adaptations.<sup>55</sup> In addition, organizational learning contains four processes i.e. acquisitions, distribution, interpretation of information and organizational memory. These processes effectively retrieve information through repositories, databases and use such retrieving knowledge to take rational decisions. Previously, a positive correlation between technological absorptive capacity and organizational learning in Spanish technology sector suggested that technological absorption capacity effectively absorbs scientific and technological knowledge, which supports an organization to improve learning process. A study by Garcia-Morales<sup>56</sup> picked 237 service and manufacturing sector companies from Europe and found positive connections between KMC and OL. They further identified KMC an important element in the knowledge management process that effectively

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<sup>51</sup> Armendia P Dixon, "Parents: Full Partners in the Decision-Making Process," *NASSP Bulletin* 76, no. 543 (1992): 15.

<sup>52</sup> Rifat O Shannak, M. Ra'ed, and Mohammad Ali, "Knowledge Management Strategy Building: Literature Review," *European Scientific Journal* 8, no. 15 (2012): 29.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>54</sup> W. Tsai, "Knowledge Transfer In Intraorganizational Networks: Effects Of Network Position And Absorptive Capacity On Business Unit Innovation And Performance," *Academy of Management Journal* 44, no. 5 (2001): 996.

<sup>55</sup> A. Dellinger, B. Yang, S.W. Howton, "The Relationship Between The Learning Organization Concept And Firms' Financial Performance: An Empirical Assessment," *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (2004): 12.

<sup>56</sup> V. J. García-Morales, M M Jiménez-Barrionuevo, and L Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez, "Transformational Leadership Influence on Organizational Performance through Organizational Learning and Innovation," *Journal of Business Research* 65, no. 7 (2012): 1040.

utilizes and manages human knowledge to accomplish long-term goals.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Cohen and Levinthal in another study<sup>58</sup> confirmed a strong association between KMC and OL. Thus, this study intended to investigate the hypothesis that:

*H<sub>3</sub>: KMC is significantly related to OL*

### **The Mediating Role of KMC between KMIT and OL**

Researchers have investigated KMC as a mediator in past studies. For instance, Mao *et al.*<sup>59</sup> studied 192 organizations from different industries i.e. IT, finance and power from both of the central and western regions of China and found that KMC significantly mediated between IT resources and competitive advantage. Similarly, Chuang<sup>60</sup> highlighted that KMC facilitates the organizations for enhancing their learning ability through developing and combining valuable resources. KMC was deliberated as organizational ability to acquire special knowledge from different business units and engagement critical knowledge with the knowledge management process to achieve strategic objectives.<sup>61</sup> Organizations are willing to deal with KMC<sup>62</sup> and understand that without utilizing KMC, they will yield low returns and hence financial loss.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, examining interventions of KMC in utilizing knowledge management infrastructure for improved organizational learning is imperative. Thus it is hypothesized that:

*H<sub>4</sub>: KMC significantly mediates between KMIT and INN*

<sup>57</sup> S.-H. Chuang, "A Resource-Based Perspective on Knowledge Management Capability and Competitive Advantage: An Empirical Investigation," *Expert Systems with Applications* 27, no. 3 (2004): 463.

<sup>58</sup> W. M. Cohen, D. A. Levinthal, "Absorptive Capacity: A New Perspective on Learning and Innovation," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1990): 140.

<sup>59</sup> Hongyi Mao, Shan Liu, Jinlong Zhang, and Zhaohua Deng, "Information Technology Resource."

<sup>60</sup> S.-H. Chuang, "A Resource-Based Perspective," 465.

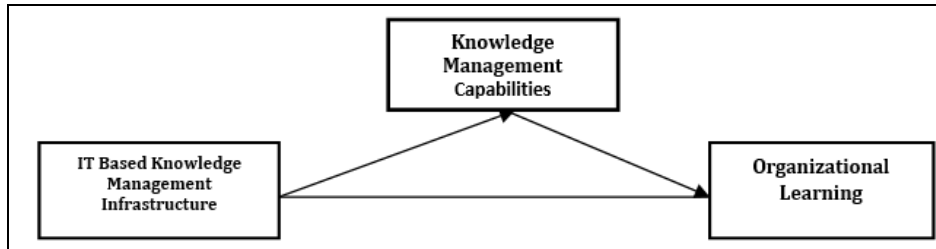
<sup>61</sup> Heeseok Lee, Byounggu Choi, "Knowledge Management Enablers, Processes, and Organizational Performance: An Integrative View and Empirical Examination," *Journal of Management Information Systems* 20, no. 1 (2003): 200; Hüseyin Tanriverdi, "Information Technology Relatedness, Knowledge Management Capability, and Performance of Multibusiness Firms," *MIS Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2005): 323.

<sup>62</sup> Satyendra Singh, Yolande E Chan, and James D McKeen, "Knowledge Management Capability And Organizational Performance: A Theoretical Foundation," *Conference Paper at the University of Warwick, Coventry* (20 - 22 March 2006): 12.

<sup>63</sup> Hüseyin Tanriverdi, "Information Technology Relatedness, Knowledge Management Capability, and Performance of Multibusiness Firms," 324.

The research framework as highlighted below in Figure 1 depicts the hypothesized relationships both direct and indirect among proposed variables. The IT-Based Knowledge Management Infrastructure (KMIT) is an independent variable and is shown as the determinant of Organizational Learning (OL) as a dependent variable. Knowledge Management Capabilities (KMC) has been hypothesized to mediate the relationship between KMIT and OL.

**Figure 1: Research Framework of the Study**



## Research Methodology

The research design of the study includes procedures, sampling, and data collection framework and data analysis.<sup>64</sup> Survey questionnaire is a superlative method for primary data collection,<sup>65</sup> and an effective technique to conduct cross-sectional research.<sup>66</sup> Since the present study supported quantitative mode of research through a structured questionnaire, this method seemed appropriate for testing the multiple hypotheses.<sup>67</sup>

## Population, Sample and Data Collection

Population refers to the total number of respondents and observations. Out of them, sample is drawn for statistical analysis.<sup>68</sup> The population for this study consists of employees working in private sector

<sup>64</sup> Alexander Topchy, Anil K. Jain, and William Punch, "Clustering Ensembles: Models Of Consensus And Weak Partitions," *IEEE Transactions On Pattern Analysis And Machine Intelligence* 27, no. 12 (2005): 1866.

<sup>65</sup> Tiffani Long, and Jennifer Bonds-Raacke, "Accelerated Reader: The Relation To Age Of Entry Into Formal Education," *Reading Improvement* 49, no. 4 (2012): 168.

<sup>66</sup> Alan Bryman, "Qualitative Research On Leadership: A Critical But Appreciative Review," *The Leadership Quarterly* 15, no. 6 (2004): 729.

<sup>67</sup> J. F. Hair, W. C. Black, B. J. Babin, R. E. Anderson, R. L. Tatham, *Multivariate Data Analysis vol. 6* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 154.

<sup>68</sup> Jonathan Van Blerkom, "Mitochondria as Regulatory Forces in Oocytes, Preimplantation Embryos and Stem Cells," *Reproductive Biomedicine Online* 16, no. 4 (2008): 553.

universities of Islamabad, Pakistan. Since the total population in all the higher educational institutions of Pakistan is not exactly known, thus for the purpose of this study, we have used a non-probability-based convenient sampling technique which has also been used by other scholars for their research in the academic sector of Pakistan.<sup>69</sup>

Keeping in view the minimum required sample size of 200 for applying Structural Equation Modelling technique, a total of 292 questionnaires were initially distributed among targeted respondents. Out of which 260 were returned which determined a response rate of 89 percent. Ten incomplete responses were removed and finally, 250 questionnaires were found valid for further statistical analysis.

## Measures

The research instrument used for this study contained 32 items, which was adapted from different scholarly studies. Slight modifications were made in the wording of items to make more understandable for the targeted respondents. Five-point Likert scale questionnaire was employed varying from “1” standing for “strongly disagree” to “5” standing for “strongly agree.” Sources of measurement instruments are reflected in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of Instrument Variables**

Factors	Items	Source
KM-IT Based Infrastructure	13	(Lu & Ram, 2011; Weill, Subramani, & Broadbent, 2002), (Bhatt & Grover, 2005)
Knowledge Management Capabilities	6	(Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001; Pérez-López & Alegre, 2012)
Organization Learning	13	(Jiménez-Jiménez & Cegarra-Navarro, 2007; Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2011)

## Data Analysis

This study followed a cross-sectional and quantitative research mode. For statistical data analysis, Smart PLS software was used to apply the Structural Modelling Technique. Smart PLS offers various advantages

<sup>69</sup> R. Jamil, Maleeha Lodhi, "Role of Knowledge Management Practices for Escalating Universities' Performance in Pakistan," *Management Science Letters* 5, no. 10 (2015): 958.

to scholars, specifically when indirect relationships (mediators and moderators) are tested, as is the case for the present study.<sup>70</sup>

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) proved to be highly effective for investigating variables, both dependent and independent<sup>71</sup> and also to measure the complicated interdependence of latent variables.<sup>72</sup> Thus, it was found appropriate to use SEM for the present study to test reliabilities, validities, and uni-dimensionality.<sup>73</sup> PLS-SEM was applied in two stages of data analysis, assessments of the measurement model and the assessments of the structural model. The measurement model determined factor loadings, composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity while the structural model tested the hypothesis, and determined the significance of hypothesized relationships. The significance of relationships was tested through t and p values obtained by running bootstrapping function in Smart PLS.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, recent studies have also suggested testing direct and indirect relationships (mediation through path model analysis) in Smart PLS.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> F. Hair Jr, M. Sarstedt, L. Hopkins and G. Kuppelwieser, "Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) An Emerging Tool in Business Research," *European Business Review* 26, no. 2 (2014): 112; J. F. Hair, C. M. Ringle, M. Sarstedt, "Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling: Rigorous Applications, Better Results and Higher Acceptance," *Long Range Planning* 46, 1 (2013): 1-12; David Gefen, Edward E. Rigdon, and Detmar Straub, "Editor's Comments: An Update and Extension to SEM Guidelines for Administrative and Social Science Research," *MIS Quarterly* (2011): 3.

<sup>71</sup> Barbara G. Tabachnick, Linda S. Fidell, and Jodie B. Ullman, "Using Multivariate Statistics," vol. 5 (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2007), 127.

<sup>72</sup> Barbara M Byrne, and Fons JR Van de Vijver, "Testing for Measurement and Structural Equivalence in Large-Scale Cross-Cultural Studies: Addressing the Issue of Non-equivalence," *International Journal of Testing* 10, no. 2 (2010): 107.

<sup>73</sup> J. F. Hair, W. C. Black, B. J. Babin, R. E. Anderson, R. L. Tatham, *Multivariate data analysis*, vol. 6 (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 156.

<sup>74</sup> Ken Kwong-Kay Wong, "Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) techniques using SmartPLS," *Marketing Bulletin* 24, no. 1 (2013): 16.

<sup>75</sup> Muhammad Shujahat, Bakhtiar Ali, Faisal Nawaz, Susanne Durst, and Aino Kianto, "Translating the impact of knowledge management into knowledge-based innovation: The neglected and mediating role of knowledge-worker satisfaction," *Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing & Service Industries* 28, no. 4 (2018): 205; Zhining Wang, Pratyush Nidhi Sharma, and Jinwei Cao, "From Knowledge Sharing to Firm Performance: A Predictive Model Comparison," *Journal of Business Research* 69, no. 10 (2016): 4652; J. F. Hair, C. M. Ringle, M. Sarstedt, "Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling: Rigorous Applications, Better Results and Higher Acceptance," *Long Range Planning* 46, no. 1 (2013): 7.

## Results

### Measurement Model Assessment

The first step confirmed the reliability and validity of the items as mentioned in Table 2. However, some of the indicators during the data analyses were removed due to their low factor loading values as highlighted in Table 3. As per the guidelines,<sup>76</sup> some of the items with low factor loadings ( $>0.40$  and  $\leq 0.70$ ) were retained as they were theoretically important and their removal had no improved effect on average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR).

Consequently, 30 items were incorporated in the final measurement model. Table 4 indicates that factor loadings values of all the constructs are within the acceptable limits between 0.40 and 0.70 or above. Similarly, CR and AVE of all the constructs are equal or above the recommended values of 0.50 and 0.70, as mentioned in Table 5. Thus, both reliability and convergent validity are established. Moreover, values of discriminant validity as indicated in Table 6, were also found adequate as per the popular method developed by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

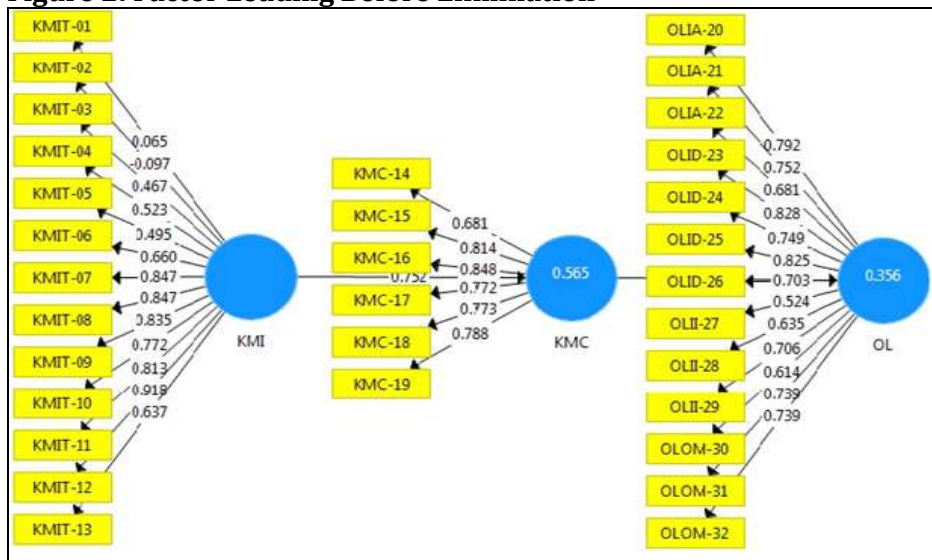
**Table 2: Indicator Outer Loading (Before Elimination)**

Items	KMC	KMIT	OL
KMIT <sup>b</sup> -01		0.065	
KMIT-02		-0.097	
KMIT-03		0.467	
KMIT-04		0.523	
KMIT-05		0.495	
KMIT-06		0.660	
KMIT-07		0.847	
KMIT-08		0.847	
KMIT-09		0.835	
KMIT-10		0.772	
KMIT-11		0.813	
KMIT-12		0.918	
KMIT-13		0.637	
KMC-14	0.681		
KMC-15	0.814		
KMC-16	0.848		

<sup>76</sup> J. F. Hair, C. M. Ringle, M. Sarstedt, "Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling: Rigorous Applications, Better Results and Higher Acceptance," *Long Range Planning* 46, no. 1 (2013): 9.

KMC-17	0.772		
KMC-18	0.773		
KMC-19	0.788		
OL-20			0.792
OL-21			0.752
OL-22			0.681
OL-23			0.828
OL-24			0.749
OL-25			0.825
OL-26			0.703
OL-27			0.524
OL-28			0.635
OL-29			0.706
OL-30			0.614
OL-31			0.739
OL-32			0.739

**Figure 2: Factor Loading Before Elimination**



**Table 3: List of Eliminated Items**

Items	Indicator loading	AVE (before elimination)	Treatment	AVE (after elimination)
KMIT <sup>a</sup> -1	0.065	0.448	Eliminated	0.531
KMIT-2	-0.097		Eliminated	

**Table 4: Indicator Outer Loading (After Elimination)**

Items	KMC	KMIT	OL
KMIT-03		0.480	
KMIT-04		0.524	
KMIT-05		0.503	
KMIT-06		0.661	
KMIT-07		0.849	
KMIT-08		0.847	
KMIT-09		0.839	
KMIT-10		0.768	
KMIT-11		0.814	
KMIT-12		0.920	
KMIT-13		0.640	
KMC-14	0.682		
KMC-15	0.814		
KMC-16	0.848		
KMC-17	0.772		
KMC-18	0.773		
KMC-19	0.788		
OL-20			0.792
OL-21			0.752
OL-22			0.681
OL-23			0.828
OL-24			0.749
OL-25			0.825
OL-26			0.703
OL-27			0.524
OL-28			0.635
OL-29			0.706
OL-30			0.614
OL-31			0.739
OL-32			0.739

**Table 5: Composite Reliability & Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

Variable	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE) - Validity	Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
KMC	0.903	0.610	0.79
KMIT	0.923	0.531	0.83
OL	0.932	0.517	0.81

**Table 6: Discriminant Validity**

Variable	KMC	KMIT	OL
KMC	0.781		
KMIT	0.741	0.729	
OL	0.597	0.871	0.719

## Structural Model Assessment

The structural model is assessed for hypotheses testing. First step examined the direct effects and the second step was to examine the indirect effect between hypothesized relationships. To determine the significance of direct paths, bootstrapping method was used and the significance of path coefficients were determined through  $t$  and  $p$  values.

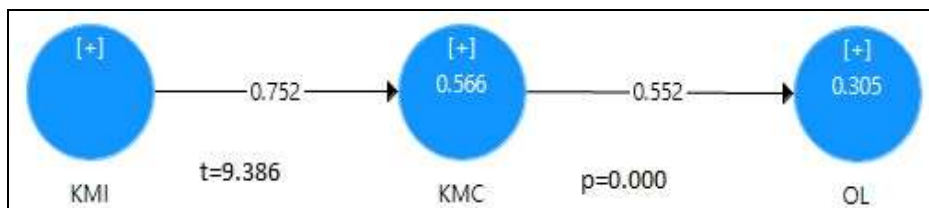
Reference to the values given in Table 7, there is a significant positive effect of KMIT on KMC ( $\beta=0.740$ ,  $t=20.018$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), and OL ( $\beta=0.889$ ,  $t=67.197$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Therefore,  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  are supported. Similarly, there is a significant positive and direct effect of KMC on OL ( $\beta=0.603$ ,  $t=16.441$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Hence,  $H_3$  is accepted. In addition,<sup>77</sup> a path analysis method was used to examine the mediation role of KMC between KMIT and OL. In this regard,  $t$  statistics and  $p$ -values for evaluating the indirect effect were obtained through bootstrapping technique in Smart PLS. The results indicate that there is significant indirect effect of KMIT on OL through KMC ( $\beta=0.443$ ,  $t=9.386$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). These findings justified the mediation of KMC and supported  $H_4$ .

<sup>77</sup> K. J. Preacher, & Hayes, A. F, "Asymptotic and Resampling Strategies for Assessing and Comparing Indirect Effects in Multiple Mediator Models," *Behavior Research Methods* 40, no. 3 (2008): 879.

**Table 7: Path Coefficients**

Hypothesis	Relationship	B	t-Value	p-Value
H <sub>1</sub>	KMIT <sup>a</sup> →KMC <sup>b</sup>	0.740	20.018	0.000
H <sub>2</sub>	KMIT→OL <sup>c</sup>	0.889	67.197	0.000
H <sub>3</sub>	KMC→OL	0.603	16.441	0.000
H <sub>4</sub>	KMIT→KMC→ OL (Indirect Effect)	0.443	9.386	0.000

**Figure 4: Mediating Role of KMC between KMIT and OL**



### Findings and Conclusion

This study examined the effect of KMIT on KMC and OL among employees working in higher educational institutes of Pakistan. The hypothesized relationships were tested using PLS-SEM technique. Findings of this research revealed that KMIT has a significant impact over both KMC and OL indirect relationships and contributed to the literature by emphasizing on KM as a strong predictor of organizational outcomes as supported by previous studies who examined similar relationships.<sup>78</sup> These studies highlighted the need for developing an efficient KM structure to enhance the academic qualities of higher education institutions.<sup>79</sup>

The findings confirmed this hypothesized intervention of KMC as mediator. These findings were also validated by Mao and Ngah which had demonstrated that KMIT positively enhances organizational capabilities for learning. The researchers noted that KMIT is a critical factor for gaining competitive advantages by strengthening the learning abilities of

<sup>78</sup> Pooja K. Singh, Manoj Kumar , "A Study on Infrastructure and Organizational Learning: Rethinking Knowledge Performance Perspective," *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2017): 66.

<sup>79</sup> Rehmat Shah, Asad Abbas Rizvi, and Nabi Bux Jumani, "Status of Knowledge Management Practices in Pakistani Universities," *International Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Learning (IJITL)* 4, no. 2 (2019): 65.

the firms. When KMIT promotes KMC values and formulate robust KM strategies that help an organization to achieve financial advantages.<sup>80</sup>

The study also hypothesized that the existence of KMIT-based infrastructure is also positively conducive to enhance KMC<sup>81</sup> which leads to improving learning skills of the education industry.<sup>82</sup> KMIT base infrastructure contained IT resource, IT human resource and IT relationship resource considered as core elements that effectively utilized and improved knowledge management capabilities.<sup>83</sup>

## Discussion

Over time, the value of knowledge management has been realized by most organizations around the world. This is also due to consistently increasing global competition, especially in the service sector as it is considered a critical factor for industry growth to enhance the organizational learning process and innovation.<sup>84</sup> Past studies verified that organizational learning is a major element that distinguishes an organization from others and assists them to gain a competitive advantage.<sup>85</sup> In addition, recent research also describes the positive association between knowledge management capability and organization learning.<sup>86</sup> In the organizational learning process, an organization strives to enhance their learning process by effectively retrieving information

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<sup>80</sup> Hongyi Mao, Shan Liu, Shan Liu, Jinlong Zhang, and Zhaohua Deng, "Information Technology Resource, Knowledge Management Capability, and Competitive Advantage: The Moderating Role of Resource Commitment," *International Journal of Information Management* 36, no. 6 (2016): 1073.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> A. Fidalgo-Blanco, M. L. Sein-Echaluce, F. J. García-Peñalvo, "Knowledge Spirals in Higher Education Teaching Innovation," *International Journal of Knowledge Management (IJKM)* 10, no. 4 (2014): 19.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Wade, John Hulland, "The Resource-Based View and Information Systems Research: Review, Extension, and Suggestions for Future Research," *MIS Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2004): 125.

<sup>84</sup> Ra'ed Masa'deh, Rifat Shannak, Mahmoud Maqableh, and Ali Tarhini, "The Impact of Knowledge Management on Job Performance in Higher Education: The Case of the University of Jordan," *Journal of Enterprise Information Management* 30, no. 2 (2017): 248.

<sup>85</sup> Wenpin Tsai, "Knowledge Transfer in Intraorganizational Networks: Effects of Network Position and Absorptive Capacity on Business Unit Innovation and Performance," *Academy of Management Journal* 44, no. 5 (2001): 1001.

<sup>86</sup> Isabel Martinez-Conesa, Pedro Soto-Acosta, and Elias George Carayannis, "On the Path Towards Open Innovation: Assessing the Role of Knowledge Management Capability and Environmental Dynamism in SMEs," *Journal of Knowledge Management* (2017): 52.

through repositories, databases, documents, embodied knowledge and it applies to take strategic decisions.<sup>87</sup>

The organizations achieve better performance and sustainable competitive advantage through knowledge management as it has a strategic role that enables organizations to develop a unique combination of their capabilities and resources to gain sustainable competitive advantage.<sup>88</sup> That is why organizations are focusing on building knowledge management infrastructure to further improve their efficiency and optimal utilization of their capabilities.<sup>89</sup> Thus, this study highlighted the importance of developing a strong knowledge management infrastructure to effectively enhance organizational learning and competencies.

KMC plays a vital role in knowledge management process that organizes special knowledge from different business units to achieve long term goal. Since KMCs are viewed as abilities that generate innovative knowledge through integration of various knowledge resources and activities that significantly affect organizational effectiveness and the learning process.<sup>90</sup> Education has become more competitive in recent times as it is difficult for an organization to enhance its learning process for a long time.<sup>91</sup> As such, present study finds KMC a critical resource that increases the organizational learning abilities of educational sector to successfully share, retrieve and retain information.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> George P. Huber, "Organizational Learning: The Contributing Processes and the Literatures," *Organization Science* 2, no. 1 (1991): 98.

<sup>88</sup> R. Shannak, B. Obeidat, and D. Almajali, "Information Technology Investments: A Literature Review," In *Proceedings of the 14th IBIMA Conference on Global Business Transformation through Innovation and Knowledge Management: An Academic Perspective, Istanbul-Turkey, 23rd-24th June*, 1356. 2010.

<sup>89</sup> Hongyi Mao, Shan Liu, Shan Liu, Jinlong Zhang, and Zhaohua Deng, "Information Technology Resource, Knowledge Management Capability, And Competitive Advantage: The Moderating Role Of Resource Commitment," 1082.

<sup>90</sup> Mir Hasan Rezaee, and Naser Aliramazani, "Investigating the Role of Knowledge Management Capabilities in the Relationship between HR Strategies for Empowerment and Innovative Performance Case Study in Western Azerbaijan," (2017): 45.

<sup>91</sup> Cong Qi, and Patrick Y. K. Chau, "Will Enterprise Social Networking Systems Promote Knowledge Management And Organizational Learning? An Empirical Study," *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce* 28, no. 1 (2018): 31.

<sup>92</sup> Isabel Martinez-Conesa, Pedro Soto-Acosta, and Elias George Carayannis, "On the Path Towards Open Innovation: Assessing the Role of Knowledge

This study further strengthens the theoretical assumptions that supports the relationship between proposed variables. Since some of the past studies provided inconsistent findings with respect to the knowledge management dimensions and their associations with knowledge management capability and organizational learning. Thus, it required further investigations by the scholars by adding the KMI dimensions into the similar framework.<sup>93</sup> It further provided a useful contribution to existing literature and also opened up the opportunity for future researchers to promote the effectiveness of KMI in the education sector.<sup>94</sup>

In view of these characteristics, the current research found that KMIT is imperative for educational institutions of Pakistan and highlights that the higher education sector is to keep up with the latest technologies ensuring global standards and creating technologically oriented knowledge basis to set the right direction for achieving sustainable competitiveness. In addition, top management of higher education institutions must pay attention to organizing the tech-oriented training of the academic and administrative workforce for effective creation and application of knowledge that enables organizations to sustain an effective learning process.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

The present study had to confront certain limitations. First, this study used a smaller sample size that consisted of academic and administrative staff which may question the generalization of findings of this study. Second, cross-sectional model was used to get respondents' feedback which may lack time-based change effect. Future studies may choose a different research designs and also consider comparative studies. The proposed framework may further be extended by investigating various psychological, organizational, and behavioural factors like member-exchange relationships, organizational support, individual self-efficacy, and other psycho-dynamic attributes.

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Management Capability and Environmental Dynamism in SMEs," *Journal of Knowledge Management* (2017): 54.

<sup>93</sup> Pooja K. Singh, Manoj Kumar , "A Study on Infrastructure and Organizational Learning: Rethinking Knowledge Performance Perspective," *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2017): 68.

<sup>94</sup> Rehmat Shah, Asad Abbas Rizvi, and Nabi Bux Jumani,"Status of Knowledge Management Practices in Pakistani Universities,"*International Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Learning (IJITL)* 4, no. 2 (2019): 62.

## FATA'S MERGER INTO KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA (KP): CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

Saeed Khan\*

### Abstract

*The history of FATA reforms can be traced back to 2009-2011 when the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government introduced reforms in the tribal regions i.e., the extension of Political Parties Order (PPO 2000) and amendments in the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR). These reforms, however, have not replaced the out-dated tribal governance structure and the region's special status remains intact. The federal government has recently merged FATA into the KP province, aiming to introduce political, economic, legal, and administrative reforms and to bring the tribal areas at par with the rest of the country. The merger in itself is a bold step to be appreciated. However, the mainstreaming project has some way to go to completion. It is indeed the beginning of a cumbersome process. The major testing task is now its implementation. This article attempts to examine the FATA-KP merger, present and future challenges, and how to make the merger a success story.*

**Keywords:** FATA, Reforms, Merger, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Challenges, Way Forward

### Introduction

The state-centric literature underlines the importance of state capacity and the will to govern and control territories falling within its national domain. According to Lake, "In a Westphalian and Weberian form of government, the state authority should be final and indivisible within its legally recognized territories."<sup>1</sup> In contrast to this, some states are hosting territories, within their national domain, where the central governments are unable to control and extend their authority. They are facing difficulties to introduce a general governmental structure, imposing political control, and evenly distribute civic goods and services all over the

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<sup>1</sup> David A. Lake, "Hobbesian Hierarchy: The Political Economy of Political Organization," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 12 (2009): 270.

territories within their national jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup> These territories fall beyond the actual state control and are generally described as “ungoverned or poorly controlled areas.”<sup>3</sup>

However, others questioning the validity of the concept and declare it as vague and implausible. To them, ‘ungoverned spaces’ do not mean that these areas are not governable. They are actually governed but different than the universally accepted tenets of governance. According to Patrick, “These areas are alternatively governed, usually by deep-rooted tribal laws and customs devised in a way to arbitrate conflicts, exercise violence, and to meet out justice in the society.”<sup>4</sup> Likewise, Lake reaches a similar conclusion and states that “political order in these areas has not disappeared. It is exercised by actors other than the state, such as traditional or religious elites, warlords, criminal gangs, and rebel groups.”<sup>5</sup> However, scholars have a consensus that ungoverned areas are dangerous. It is considered “a potential security threat to the world peace.”<sup>6</sup> Along with other issues, a general perception exists that these areas have provided a favourable environment for non-state actors to organise and perform indiscriminate activities.

Since its inception, Pakistan has been facing serious governance and state-building issues in some of its peripheral areas. These territories fall beyond the actual state control where the writ of the state is weak, if not fully absent. Analysts have noted that, “in these areas, the national, provincial and district governments have no significant presence and informal systems and practices often play state-like activities, with a hybrid system to give official sanction to informal authorities.”<sup>7</sup> In this conjunction, a case in point is the FATA region.

Since its assimilation into Pakistan in 1948, the FATA region has been administered through the British imposed system of administration and special colonial laws. Successive Pakistani governments have continuously ignored to develop these areas to integrate them into the mainland governance spectrum. As a result, FATA remained as one of the least developed regions of Pakistan, and its governance issues multiplied many fold. Over the years, this region remained beyond the actual central

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<sup>2</sup> Aurélie Campana and Benjamin Ducol, “Rethinking Terrorist Safe Havens: Beyond a State-Centric Approach,” *Civil Wars* 13, no. 4 (2011): 400.

<sup>3</sup> Stewart M. Patrick, “Weak States and Global Threats: Fact of Fiction?” *Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2006):27–53.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick, “Weak States and Global Threats,” 33.

<sup>5</sup> Lake, “Hobbesian Hierarchy,” 272.

<sup>6</sup> Janosch Prinz, “Pak-Afghan Border among Global High-Risk Ungoverned Spaces,” *The Express Tribune*, October 19, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, “No Sign until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan Afghanistan Frontier,” *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 42.

government authority. In these areas, non-state actors and other criminals not only practiced illicit and anti-state activities but also challenged the writ of the state repeatedly. According to an estimate, during the years of 2007-2008, only 37 percent of the territory in FATA remained under the central government's regular control.<sup>8</sup> Marten concludes that, "the dominance of weapons culture, unique tribal governance system, tough geographical features, ethnic tensions and the presence of militants all these direct to deduce that FATA is an ungoverned region."<sup>9</sup>

Because of the poor governance and law and order issues, there have been consistent calls from the international community and human rights organizations, to reform and integrate FATA into the national mainstream. Therefore, the federal government could no longer absolve itself from the situation in the tribal region. In an attempt to reform and integrate FATA, the government has merged it into the KP in 2018.

The major questions that guide the thrust of this research are: Will the merger scheme be smoothly implemented? What are its future challenges and what should be done to make the merger scheme a success story? To address these questions qualitative-descriptive research method has been adopted, using both primary and secondary sources, with more focus on primary data like 'semi-structured in-depth interviews' and 'Focus Group Discussions' with tribal people, experts, and scholars with comprehensive knowledge on the subject. The Purposive Sampling method has been used to approach the most relevant informants and to get the relevant information. The central argument of this article is that FATA has seen decades of instability and quick fixing of its multidimensional governance and other related issues is not possible overnight. To reform the region, the merger scheme is one of the major steps ever employed which is yet to go a long way to achieve its desired objectives.

## Theoretical Framework

The theory of "Political Integration and Political Stability: A Hypothesis"<sup>10</sup> by Claude Ake fulfills the theoretical understanding as it provides a better solution to the problem of integrating the peripheral areas of a state like Pakistan. The process of political integration is defined as "how to construct a single sound political society from a fusion of traditional societies; how to develop cultural homogeneity and values harmony; and how to extort respect and attachment to the claims of the

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<sup>8</sup> "Military to 'Offer PDM Chai-Pani' if They Come to Pindi," *The Express Tribune*, January 11, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Kimberly Marten, *Warlords: Strong-arm Brokers in Weak States* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2012), 62.

<sup>10</sup> Claude Ake, "Political Integration and Political Stability: A Hypothesis," *World Politics* 19, no. 3 (1967): 486-499.

state.”<sup>11</sup> The author states that the drive for successful integration highly depends on strong social communication among the civic community. It can be developed through social mobilization in society. Social mobilization is defined as “the process in which major clusters of old social, economic, and psychological commitments are broken down and community members are receptive to new patterns of socialization.”<sup>12</sup>

The author acknowledges that the drive for integration is not a smooth process and can generate tensions and alienations among the community. “Those whose power status is challenged in the process may seek to destroy the new order. Those compelled to leave their folk cultures may be feeling lonely, insecure, and perhaps prone to distrust the meaning of their new life.”<sup>13</sup> This leads the author to a central question such as; what kind of political system is most suitable for carrying out this process? The drive for integrating the peripheral areas of a state can only be successful when a political system is authoritarian, consensual, identific, and paternal. If any of these characteristics are absent, the drive for integration will increase instability instead of stability.<sup>14</sup>

Successive Pakistani governments have attempted different strategies to reform and integrate FATA into the national mainstream, but none of them succeeded to achieve its desired results. The question arises why successive integration attempts failed and what should be done to successfully integrate the FATA region into the national mainstream? Embracing the major tenets of Ake’s theory can largely help the policy makers in designing a comprehensive strategy to effectively deal with the FATA integration problem. The merger scheme has created a suitable environment, as all the stakeholders are on the same page to complete the integration process. It demands to be vigilant support and can be used as an opportunity for taking further practical steps to reform, to successfully integrate the tribal regions in the mainland of Pakistan.

### **FATA Merger into KP and Future Challenges**

In an attempt to reform and integrate FATA into the national mainstream, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) in 2013, resumed the FATA reform process and resolved to take some pragmatic reform steps. For the purpose to offer policy suggestions about reforms and the likely future status of the FATA, the ‘FATA Reforms Committee 2015’, was constituted. The committee, after thorough homework and consultation with different stakeholders, recommended the integration of FATA in the KP province, as a viable option to reform and integrate FATA.

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<sup>11</sup> Claude Ake, “Political Integration and Political Stability: A Hypothesis.”

<sup>12</sup> Karl W. Deutsch, “Social Mobilization and Political Development,” *American Political Science Review* 55, no.3 (1961): 634-647.

<sup>13</sup> Ake, “Political Integration and Political Stability,” 488.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

According to Aziz, "The mainstreaming is officially complete and the seven former tribal agencies no longer exist. They are now part of the KP province and may be called as Tribal Districts."<sup>15</sup>

The merger scheme was hailed by many and a lot of expectations were associated with it. However, it must be admitted that the proposed reforms package is in the pipeline and is yet to be materialized. The major task is now its implementation which is not as easy as it seems to be. Some challenging factors are anticipated to create hurdles in the way of implementing the current reforms package. Thus, it may be valuable to discuss it in detail, to enlighten the policymakers about the realities on the ground and to take feasible steps to correct them. The next part focuses on internal economic, administrative, and legal challenges to the merger scheme.

### **Economic Challenges**

The first and foremost test for any reform intervention is the availability of resources. According to a government official, "25 percent of reforms in the newly born tribal districts require no much monetary resources, but the remaining 75 percent cannot go without funds."<sup>16</sup> As a result of successive governments' neglect, FATA is one of the least developed regions of Pakistan. According to an estimate, the poverty ratio in FATA is 73.7 percent and the majority of its inhabitants are underprivileged in terms of health, education, and other standards of living.<sup>17</sup> The region infrastructure almost stands devastated, due to successive waves of militancy and indiscriminate activities of the militant non-state actors. It is estimated that around 19,600 commercial units got destroyed only in North Waziristan, which were providing livelihood to approximately 35,000 families from Miranshah metropolis.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, a total of 5.3 million people have been displaced from their homes as a result of counter-terrorism military operations.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure, repatriation, and rehabilitation of the internally displaced families, and establishing a brand

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<sup>15</sup> Sartaj Aziz, "History of FATA Reforms," *Pakistan Today* (Islamabad), March 8, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Iftikhar Firdous, "Proposed Merger: Funds Allocation Likely to be a Bone of Contention," *The Express Tribune* (Karachi), February 19, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> "Multidimensional Poverty in Pakistan," United Nations Development Programme, June, 2016, <http://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home/library/aids/Multidimensional-Poverty-in-Pakistan.html.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Ashraf Ali and Amna Waheeda, "Hoping for A Better Tomorrow: Aspirations of the Local FATA Community," *Development Advocate Pakistan* 4, no. 2 (June 2017): 46.

<sup>19</sup> Claude Rakisit, "Pakistan's Tribal Areas are Brought in from the Cold," *South Asia Democratic Forum*, no. 122 (2018): 2-13.

new administrative setup in the newly born tribal districts are among the key gigantic tasks that could only be achieved with sufficient resources.

### **a) Resources Allocation and Redressing Provinces' Concerns**

Under the banner of the current ongoing reforms package, the federal government has projected an amount of PKR 121 billion annually, to finance a comprehensive socio-economic and political development plan for the newly declared tribal districts (former agencies), which is estimated to spread over 10 years.<sup>20</sup> However, such a generous package has been made without denoting the sources to generate these funds. To keep on the commitment, the federal government is eyeing cuts to the budgets of central and provincial governments in the National Finance Commission (NFC) divisible pool.

It is suggested that out of the total PKR 121 billion, the central government would contribute PKR 52 billion, whereas the remaining PKR 69 billion would be supplied by the provincial units of the federation.<sup>21</sup> In this connection, Punjab province has to contribute PKR 36 billion, Sindh PKR 17 billion, KP PKR 10 billion, and Baluchistan PKR 6 billion respectively.<sup>22</sup> However, the smooth materialization of this formula is not an easy task. The major problem is that there is no existing commitment between the provinces and the central government.

Although most of the members of the National Assembly (MNA) and Senators from other provinces have supported the merger scheme as a viable option, but, when it comes to financing and implementing the proposed scheme they have expressed reservations to share their shares of the NFC award. They have already strongly objected to the central government for three percent cuts to their share in the divisible pool for the security of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and one percent each for climate change and sustainable development goals. Given their own needs and already scarce financial resources, the provinces have already expressed their reservations and stated that they are already going short of resources and any additional cuts would create further financial problems for them. Such a situation raises the question that whether the provinces will agree to any further cuts to their shares from the divisible pool.

It is also stated that instead of imposing the burden on the provinces, the center should take care of the newly born tribal districts. The contentions on the part of provinces have already compelled the

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<sup>20</sup> Syed Adnan Ali Shah Bukhari, "Bottlenecks in FATA's Mainstreaming," *Development Advocate Pakistan* 4, no. 2 (2017): 6-11.

<sup>21</sup> Ismail Khan, "Discord over Resources may Derail FATA Reforms," *Dawn*, January 14, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

federal government to allocate only PKR 26.9 billion for the FATA region in the fiscal budget for 2017-2018.<sup>23</sup> Hence, finance and resource allocation is one of the major challenges. The entire course of the current reforms will be in jeopardy if the availability of funds is not guaranteed in the near future.

## **b) Integration of the Tribal Informal Economy and Halting the Illicit Businesses**

Another testing task in the post-merger period is the integration of the informal economy of FATA into the mainstream and halting the illicit businesses. In comparison to other parts of the country, FATA depicts a different picture, when it comes to the regulation and monitoring of economic activities. The tribal economy has always been informal in nature and economic activities largely remained undocumented and unaudited.<sup>24</sup> Such a laissez-faire system has mostly helped in becoming this region a haven for illegal businesses, smuggling, and other undesirable economic activities.

Due to prolonged isolation from mainstream economic activities, FATA remains one of the most underdeveloped and backward region of the country where there is no proper industrialization but only a few small-scale industries. However, due to the precarious situation of law and order, most of these industries almost remain closed. According to a survey, out of 1815 small-scale industries, 92 percent have been closed in Kurram, 73 percent in Bajaur, 53 percent in North Waziristan, and 50 percent in South Waziristan, respectively.<sup>25</sup> In such situation, almost 97 percent of households remained dependent on subsistence agriculture and livestock nurturing.<sup>26</sup>

However, these sectors have also been severely affected due to constant conflicts and militant activities in the near past. As a result, employment opportunities are less and the level of investment in these areas is scary. Such a situation made scores of tribal people vulnerable to different kinds of illicit economic activities and illegal means of earning. A local hailing from Mohmand Agency elaborates that, "Due to the absence of any formal economic activities and employment opportunities hundreds of

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<sup>23</sup> Bukhari, "Bottlenecks in FATA's Mainstreaming," 7.

<sup>24</sup> Jamal Khan, "Impact of FCR on FATA Economy," Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Peshawar Chapter, July 2005, <https://hrccp-web.org/hrccpweb/wp-content/pdf/ff/23.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> "Survey-Enumeration of Industries, Service Sector Entities, Labour Force and Identifying Constraints in FATA," FATA Development Authority, March, 2015, <http://fatada.gov.pk/survey-enumeration-of-industries-service-sector-entities-labour-force-and-identifying-constraints-in-fata.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

people are involved in smuggling and black marketing, some to meet bread earning while others for profit maximization."<sup>27</sup>

As a result, the trade of smuggled goods and other prohibited items such as smuggled cars, weapons, chemicals, marijuana, etc., have been main businesses with its trading centers in almost seven former tribal agencies. In general, the tribesmen consider smuggling as a legitimate activity and call it '*Tijarat*' (Business).<sup>28</sup> According to an estimate around 40 percent of residents of Bajaur, Mohmand and Khyber have been directly or indirectly linked with Bara Market of Peshawar in businesses of non-customed goods and particles.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, around 2,200 families in Darra Adam Khel and Bara Tehsils of the Khyber region have been involved in nearly 250 weapon manufacturing industries and businesses.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, due to the absence of proper governance setup and other regulatory frameworks, the region has been a fertile ground for drugs manufacturing and associated illegal businesses since the Soviet's involvement in Afghanistan. In this connection, cannabis plants harvesting and marketing have been rampant in the region. Interestingly, some local farmers used to cultivate it as a regular crop to meet their daily needs. An analyst elaborates it as, "since these people (mostly farmers) have no alternative source of income that is why their daily life survival revolves around the hashish/marijuana crop."<sup>31</sup> He further states that "Most of the people in these areas never have enough cash to meet their needs, so they used to get loans for everything. These loans were then paid back after yielding the annual hashish/marijuana crop."<sup>32</sup> Similarly, some people were involved in this activity because of its high-profit revenue generation chances. A researcher elaborates this estimation as "two-acre plot of land cultivated with cannabis is usually expected to make around one million Pakistani rupees. In comparison, the maize crop hardly yields 50,000."<sup>33</sup> Addressing the issue of illegal drugs in the region is also one of the main challenges for successive governments.

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<sup>27</sup> Interview from a local belonging to Mohmand Agency (Now Tribal District), July 12, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Muhammad Tayyab Ghafoor, "Impediments Involved in the Integration of Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) in the National Mainstream of Pakistan," (Master thesis, University of Baluchistan, 2005), 20.

<sup>29</sup> Asif Mian, "Tribal Economy in the Context of Ongoing Militancy," *Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies* 2, no. 3 (2009): 1-9.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ghulam Dastageer, "Problems in FATA's Merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," *Herald* (Karachi), January 2, 2019, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Faheem Mohammad, "Property Rights, Contracts, and Development: A Study of the Traditional Institutions of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan," (PhD thesis, The University of Auckland, 2012), 170.

### **c)The Extension of Economic Regulatory Frameworks to the Newly Born Tribal Districts**

The extension of formal economic regulatory frameworks to the newly born tribal districts is another challenging task. These areas have long been remained excluded from the national mainstream economic regulatory frameworks and formal Banking systems to manage economic activities and monetary transactions. In FATA, as mentioned earlier, economic activities were mostly managed through illegal ways known as the *Hundi* or *Hawala* system, an unofficial way of exchanging and transacting money.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, in the absence of formal financial institutions, the majority of the tribal population used to borrow money from the informal sources<sup>35</sup> like from friends, families and other informal markets, while only 0.3 percent was borrowed from formal institutions and banks<sup>36</sup>

In a nutshell, the mainstreaming project would not be completed without bringing substantial changes in the existing informal economic system of FATA through the extension of formal economic regulatory frameworks and halting illegal businesses. However, the task is not as easy as it seems to be. The major problem to any change will come from some vested interest groups, for whom the existing informal financial system is more profitable. The local people shared a similar concern and stated that “A huge black economy has blossomed in the status quo. It is hard to believe that the mafia of this money will easily step back, abdicate their perks and privileges. They will keep challenging reforms, as change will be a hard blow to their interests.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Administrative Challenges**

In the post-merger period, indirectly administering the newly born tribal districts and continuing with the traditional tribal governance system is neither possible nor desirable anymore. These areas now need to be governed through the regular administrative machinery of the country. In this connection, the KP province is supposed to take the lead and accept additional responsibility to administer these districts. However, governing these areas and managing its administrative affairs smoothly is going to be a testing task. An analyst endorses this supposition: “It would not have taken more than a week of the officials to complete the files work concerning merging certain departments of

<sup>34</sup> Mian, “Tribal Economy,” 7.

<sup>35</sup> Khan, “Impact of FCR on FATA Economy.”

<sup>36</sup> Sakib Sherani, “FATA Reforms and Socio Economic Development,” *Development Advocate Pakistan* 4, no. 2 (2017): 17-24.

<sup>37</sup> Group Discussion with Locals Belonging to Khyber Agency (Now Tribal District), October 10, 2019.

FATA and KP. However, its management is going to be a cumbersome task.”<sup>38</sup>

### **a) KP Province Huge Responsibilities and Likely Managerial Issues**

Currently, the administrative arrangements in the newly born tribal districts are either considerably absent or largely non-functional. Thus, the extension of regular administrative machinery and effectively managing the affairs of these districts would put additional administrative burdens and economic constraints on the KP government. Pervez Khattak, ex-chief Minister of KP, shares a similar concern that “The province (KP) was already short of resources and subjecting it to further managerial responsibilities and financial burdens would create more problems for it.”<sup>39</sup> The tribal people also see the new arrangements with suspicious eyes and they are uncertain about any improvement. An analyst noted down the tribal people's concern that “KP is a poor province that looks to international donors and the federal government to meet its own needs. There are some districts in the province (KP) that are worse-off than some tribal areas. If it cannot manage itself, how will it manage us?”<sup>40</sup>

Another important issue is the equitable distribution of resources and other development portfolios between the newly born tribal districts and other areas of KP. The FATA merger into KP is done on the same footings as happened in the case of the Malakand region merger into mainland Pakistan in 1969. The merger scheme can possibly lead to wrangling among other divisions. It is to be noted that, except Malakand division, all the divisions of KP pay taxes while its development portfolio is equally shared. Likewise, the FATA region does not pay any tax and contributes very little to the national purse, while in the future it is expected to claim its share from the total sum of resources allocated for the KP.<sup>41</sup> Such concessions compromise the rule of law on the one hand and public service delivery on the other hand. In this regard, it is imperative to ensure that in the post-merger period the resources meant for the tribal districts are properly spent on these regions and the other districts of KP are also given proper attention. The general concern is that any mishandling can create further issues and complexities with unprecedented consequences.

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<sup>38</sup> Iftikhar Firdous, “Analysis: How Ready is K-P for Merger with FATA,” *The Express Tribune* (Karachi), March 13, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Khan, “Discord over Resources.”

<sup>40</sup> Danyal Adam Khan, “Why the Most Ambitious Initiative to Change FATA’s Status is put on Hold,” *Herald* (Karachi), May 25, 2018, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Mohammad Ali Babakhel, “Reform for Peace,” *Dawn* (Islamabad), December 20, 2017.

## **b) Capacity Building of the Line Departments and Appropriate Mechanism for Distribution of Powers**

Among the manifold gigantic tasks ahead, capacity building of the line departments, which are responsible to administer and manage the affairs of the tribal districts in the future, is another must task. It is one of the necessary conditions to implement the said reforms package in true letter and spirit. For example, the FATA Secretariat could not even spend PKR 23 billion funds allocated for the annual development program in 2017-2018. Out of this, probably only half has been spent effectively.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, there is proper auditing mechanism for the annual expenditures in the FATA region and the tribal administration has been generally known for its poor management and rampant corruption.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the past experiences hint that without efficient and workable administrative and managerial arrangements the latest set of reforms will go nowhere and can even lead to further problems and complexities. An analyst shares a similar concern and states that "In case the promised funds (PKR 120 billion) are provided, perhaps a bigger challenge would be to spend the money timely and transparently because corruption and lack of capacity of the relevant institutions have always been a problem."<sup>44</sup>

In addition to capacity building, it will also be crucial to avoid overlapping roles and responsibilities among different institutions. Recently, the tribal region's affairs were run by three agencies—the FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA), the FATA Secretariat, and the FATA Development Authority (FDA) respectively. In the post-merger period, the overlapping roles and responsibilities can lead to complexities and will have negative impacts on the managerial affairs of the tribal districts. Thus, it is imperative not only to strengthen the capacity of the existing institutions but to also develop a smooth and efficient system of coordination among them.

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<sup>42</sup> Maheen Hassan and Umer Akhlaq Malik, "FATA Mainstreaming: Placing People at the Centre of Development," *Development Advocate Pakistan* 4, no. 2 (2017): 9-14.

<sup>43</sup> Mazhar Ali Khan, "Social, Political and Economic Implications of Frontier Crimes Regulation 1901, in FATA, Pakistan," *Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2014): 250-261.

<sup>44</sup> Rahimullah Yusufzai, "Challenges of FATA Merger," *Institute for Policy Reforms*, June, 2018, <https://ipr.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Challenges-of-FATA-Merger.pdf>.

### c) Land Mapping and Land Settlements in the Newly Born Tribal Districts

Besides other administrative arrangements, land mapping and settlement in the newly born tribal districts is also a big problem due to seclusion from the mainstream regulatory frameworks. In the past, land mapping and divisions were mainly managed through informal ways and tribal customs, known as “*Wesh*” (division on inheritance).<sup>45</sup> Similarly, some of the lands remain un-demarcated and different tribes claim their collective ownership, called *Shamilat* (community lands).<sup>46</sup> These lands are owned collectively, and can be used and benefited from, but only with the consent of the concerned tribes.<sup>47</sup> However, due to the complex nature of these lands and collective ownership, it has rarely been utilized and has always been the major cause of enmity and conflict among different tribes and clans. Local believes that, “since there are no proper land records, thus no one knows who owns what. Its readjustment and proper official documentation will ignite tensions and can lead to communal disputes, besides activating controversies on the judicial front.”<sup>48</sup>

During the fieldwork, the local people also shared their concerns about previous deals and commitments related to land selling and purchasing, and stated that it is leading to fresh issues and clashes. According to them, “in the past people had sold and bought lands from each other. At that time the price of these properties was very low and now, given the situation going to normalcy, the worth of these lands is manifold. After realizing the worth of the sold properties, the selling parties are now demanding the abandonment of the past deals and reclaim the ownership.”<sup>49</sup> A friend from South Waziristan shared a similar story and stated that “years before we had bought 45 Kanal of land from a family, with a low cost. Now the family is asking for the cancellation of the past agreement and considers it is their ‘*Nikat*’<sup>50</sup> and should be given back

<sup>45</sup> James William Spain, *The Way of the Pathans* (London: Robert Hale, 1962), 89.

<sup>46</sup> In Pashtun society, lands that are demarcated are assigned to individuals as private property, whereas land that is not demarcated as such is held as common property by various tribes, commonly referring to as *Shamilat* property.

<sup>47</sup> Mohammad, “Property Rights, Contracts, and Development,” 110.

<sup>48</sup> Group Discussion with tribal elders belonging to Mohmand Agency (Now Tribal District), March 1, 2020.

<sup>49</sup> Group Discussion with tribal elders belonging to Bajuar Agency (Now Tribal District), March 7, 2020.

<sup>50</sup> *Nikat* is derived from *Nikah* (grandfather). So, *Nikat* means a piece of land inherited from the grandfather. It is a well-known tradition in the Pashtun tribal regions.

to them. It has led to a serious clash between the two families and up till now six people, three from each family, have lost their lives.”<sup>51</sup>

The stories from other ex-agencies reflect a similar situation. According to the locals from Bajaur tribal district, the region is already observing disputes over land mapping and ownership. They stated that “due to the military operations in Bajaur Agency, since 2008-2013, a huge market consisted of about one thousand shops has been bulldozed in the Khar area. Now it is difficult to demarcate and identify its real ownership claims. Such demographic changes have already caused disputes among the local people and in the future, when formal municipal laws and regulations will be applied, it could ignite more tribes conflicts”.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Geo News reported a clash between two groups over land settlement in South Waziristan, which left four people dead and two injured.<sup>53</sup> *Dawn News* also reported clashes between two rival groups over land ownership in Kurram District on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 resulted in the killing of twelve people and getting many injured.<sup>54</sup> The conflict took place when one group started construction on what the local people affirmed as *Shamilat*.

## Legal Challenges

Given the fast-changing circumstances, the previous administrative and legal systems of the tribal regions cannot work properly and need improvement. It is only possible when the formal laws and regular administrative machinery of the state are extended to these areas. However, analysts have warned that the extension of a number of Pakistan laws and other regulatory frameworks may lead to complexities and insecurities among the tribal population. It can lead to a situation similar to that of Swat region, when it was abruptly merged into mainland Pakistan in 1969 without any prior preparation and proper arrangements.<sup>55</sup>

Since the inception of Swat state in 1915, it had been mainly governed according to the local customary laws and mores, mostly made by the local *Jirga* (council of elders) or the ruler himself.<sup>56</sup> The situation,

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with a friend belonging to South Waziristan Agency (Now Tribal District), July 7, 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Group Discussion with locals belonging to Bajaur Agency (Now Tribal District), June 8, 2020.

<sup>53</sup> “Geo Television News, “A Clash between Two Groups on Land in South Waziristan,” January 4, 2020, <https://www.geo.tv.pk>.

<sup>54</sup> “Kurram Tribesmen Clash over Land Ownership,” *Dawn* (Islamabad), June 29, 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Mohammad Ali Babakhel, “Before Merger,” *Dawn* (Islamabad), April 19, 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Sultan-i-Rome, *Swat State (1915-1969): From Genesis to Merger* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 134.

however, totally changed when it was merged into Pakistan. The abrupt extension of Pakistani regular administrative machinery and formal laws led to grievances and unrest among the local population. The reason was an understanding of the local customs and unfamiliarity with the state's regular laws as well as the time-consuming courts procedure.<sup>57</sup> Owing to the grievances of the local population, the government introduced the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) regulations in these areas in 1975.<sup>58</sup> These regulations were a blend of regular formal laws of the country and the informal customary laws which were then enforced.<sup>59</sup>

However, the regulation proved to be a futile attempt, and instead of solving the problems and redressing the grievances of the people it created further complexities and ambiguities in their minds. A group of lawyers submitted an appeal in the Peshawar High Court and demanded the dismissal of the PATA Regulation in the late 1980s. The Court gave its judgment in February 1990 in favour of the petition.<sup>60</sup> Subsequently, in 1994 the Supreme Court of Pakistan ruled that the PATA Regulation was unconstitutional and that customary tribal courts, administered by local notables, were no more legal and had to be replaced all over the region by formal and regular court system of the country.<sup>61</sup> The decision created a legal vacuum in the region, as the already in force system lost its vitality and the new arrangements had yet to take place.

Such a situation created a kind of governance and legal vacuum in these regions. It paved the way for Maulana Sufi Muhammad's movement *Tehrek-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Mohammadi* (TNSM) for the implementation of the Islamic Sharia System.<sup>62</sup> Keeping in view the grievances and resentments of the people, the TNSM filled the vacuum and carefully exploited the local population, by promising them to solve their problems and issues. The attractive slogan of the TNSM was that the Islamic Sharia system will provide them with a simple procedure where cases will be decided quickly and justice will be cheap as practiced in the past.<sup>63</sup> They also chanted the slogan, "Judges in civil courts were corrupt and had little knowledge of regional mores, while state-educated lawyers were little better than jackals".<sup>64</sup> Gradually, they succeeded in creating a negative perception among the people about the regular law and court system.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Babakhel, "Before Merger."

<sup>59</sup> Khadim Hussain, "Truth about the PATA Regulation," *Dawn* (Islamabad), April 16, 2008.

<sup>60</sup> Rome, *Swat State*, 146.

<sup>61</sup> Hussain, "Truth about the PATA Regulation."

<sup>62</sup> Imtiaz Ali, "Militant or Peace Broker? A Profile of the Swat Valley's Maulana Sufi Mohammad," *Terrorism Monitor* 7, no. 7 (2009): 1-10.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Consequently, the TNSM capitalized on the grievances of citizens and carefully exploited the situation to their ends that resulted in a full-swing militant insurgency in Malakand and other adjacent regions during 1994, and subsequently in 2008-2009, which caused havoc to the region and inflicted violence to its people on multiple accounts.

The same situation is currently being experienced in the newly born tribal districts. In the absence of any formal governance and judicial system, the tribal people manage and resolve their issues according to the formal tribal system of governance and justice system. The people are used to this system and understand its procedures very well. In the post-merger scenario, the regular Pakistani laws are now planned to be extended to these areas. The number of these laws is 144, which include the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP), Civil Procedure Code (CPC), and *Qanoon-i-Shahadat* Order 1984, along with several other minor laws.<sup>65</sup> Due to the complex nature and involvement of too much formalism, technicalities, and procedural complexities of these laws, understanding these procedures for a layman without any technical support is impossible.

Against this backdrop, analysts have warned that the extension of formal laws into the tribal regions and its indigestion by the tribal population will probably be problematic. It may lead to confusion among the locals and ultimately the rejection of the formal laws and other legal frameworks. Furthermore, they may face difficulties in how to initiate their cases and what timelines and procedures to follow. In this regard, Khattak says; "Majority of the tribesmen even cannot spell out their names. They are even extremely unaware of what joining with the KP province means for them."<sup>66</sup> The expensive and time-consuming procedures in the formal court system may also ignite unrest among the tribal population, as the informal tribal system of justice was less expensive and speedy. Mohmand endorses this supposition that "in tribal regions, the *Jirga* system usually resolved disputes at low cost, with a simple procedure and within a time frame of not more than six months, while in the rest of the country cases linger indefinitely."<sup>67</sup> Given this ground reality, there are serious concerns among the tribals. They see the merger scheme and other associated new arrangements with suspicion. The general tribal perception is that the extension of regular laws and formal administrative machinery would be nothing more than replacing

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<sup>65</sup> Waseem Ahmed Shah, "The Proposed Rewaj Act: A New FCR," *Dawn* (Islamabad), May 24, 2018.

<sup>66</sup> Abdur Rauf Khattak, "Reforms to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA): An Unresolved Problem," *Asian Affairs* 48, no. 3, (2017): 529-543.

<sup>67</sup> Rustam Shah Mohmand, "Manifold Challenges Lie ahead after FATA Merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," *The News* (Karachi), July 9, 2018.

the corrupt system of a political agent with a more corrupt police and regular court system.<sup>68</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In comparison to the previous reform initiatives, the merger scheme is a bold step and must be appreciated. However, it does not complete the mainstream project. It must be admitted that the proposed reforms package is in the pipeline which is yet to be materialized. The full-scale integration of the region is complex and involves various dimensions. It entails the political, legal, administrative, social, security, and economic aspect of mainstreaming. Therefore, developing the newly born tribal districts, improving the key indicators of good governance, the provision of basic constitutional rights to its population, the extension of legal and economic regulatory frameworks to these regions, and guaranteeing better rule of law are some of the gigantic tasks that the current and upcoming governments are supposed to deal with. It requires huge resources, serious commitments on the part of the government, and above all great patience and perseverance in the face of various issues and challenges.

Bringing change into an area as volatile as the FATA region is indeed challenging, but doing this will have its paramount significance for this region and the country as a whole. The current reform package has created a suitable environment. It demands to be vigilantly cashed and used as an opportunity for taking further practical steps, to meaningfully materialize the mainstream project and transform these areas into a normalized territory. FATA is rich in natural resources but largely remains unexplored. If the situation in these areas gets normal and the natural resources are properly explored and extracted, the region has the potential to play its role in national development. To overcome the aforementioned challenges the article offers the following future guidelines for policymakers which essentially may not provide a complete solution to the issues, but can help in laying a foundation for building a viable structure.

## **Way Forward**

1. For any reform intervention and its successful implementation, winning the battle of the minds and hearts of the tribal people is a necessary condition. For this purpose, the government should work closely with tribal people and give them the impression of goodwill, kindness, and care.
2. Introducing developmental projects and reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructure and community life must occur on a priority basis. For this purpose, the government must set aside

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<sup>68</sup> During the field work majority of the tribal people expressed this concern.

- its entire low level and non-productive development works in the rest of the country for at least three years and divert maximum funds for the reformation and development of the newly born tribal districts on the model of German unification.
3. The tribal people see the merger scheme and other associated reforms with suspicious eyes. It is suggested to exploit the tribal social standards and customs and blend them with the regular laws. Initially, the tribal people's response to these laws and regulations might be a big 'no'. But under the changing circumstances, and by educating them about its importance and usefulness in the long run they will accept reforms and regulations.
  4. In the post-merger period, since the KP province is taking all the additional responsibility, therefore, it needs to be supported and provided with all the required resources. Therefore, both the provincial and federal governments, irrespective of their political differences and regional interests, should come forward and play their part in materializing the merger scheme.
  5. The government should engage these people in productive economic activities, by offering jobs and other alternative sources of income. If the tribal people are given job opportunities and alternative economic activities then they will have no reason to continue illegal economic activities and drug trafficking.
  6. To ensure realistic development planning in the post-merger scenario, the existing census statistical data about the FATA region must be rectified and updated. It will help in accurately allocating the due share of the newly born tribal districts in the total sum of resources allocation to the KP province and to avoid any kind of further confusion.
  7. The inter- and intra-tribe disputes and the periodic militants' attacks are some of the issues that are likely to jeopardize the prospects of peace and stability in the tribal society. Therefore, it is recommended that permanent military cantonments should be created in FATA, to effectively deal with any future disturbing situation.

## Book Reviews

**Title:** Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World  
**Author:** Fareed Zakaria  
**Publisher:** W. W. Norton & Company, Inc, New York, 2020, 320.

Earth is not an uncharted territory for pandemics. From bubonic plague of the 14<sup>th</sup> century causing infamous Black Death to Spanish flu in the midst of the First World War in the previous century, hundreds of millions had fallen prey to them. Some marvellous accomplishments in medical science had stamped out many such fatal diseases also. Nevertheless, from the First to the Third World, the spending on healthcare has been chump-change as it comparatively receives paltry sums. Soon after occupying the White House, President Trump drastically retrenched the budget for dealing with public health and diseases. His move attracted severe invective.

Fareed Zakaria, the CNN's host of GPS 360 and author of this book, castigated President Trump's proposal and predicted havoc from a minuscule creature thousands time smaller than the head of a pin. His prognosis turned into reality with detection of a microbe having 0.1 micrometer diameter in Wuhan, China, christened as coronavirus (Covid-19) that diffused every nook and cranny of the globe. Together with 9/11 Twin Tower attacks in 2001 and financial crash of 2008, Covid-19 crisis is the third major but the biggest and most global shock of its two predecessors in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This book sketches the contours of post Covid-19 global order based on the author's observations and forecasts in four major arenas: globalization and digitalization, governance, international relations, and economy.

The first area is the 21<sup>st</sup> century's Information Revolution, defined by three variables: speed, openness and stability. The wild outreach of Covid-19 underlined the inherent instability and shortcomings of this highly benefic open and speedy international system. The unhindered flow of people, goods, services, culture and ideas with breakneck speed has rendered the system unstable also. Simultaneously, only two of these three variables can be attained: if fastness and stability are targeted like that of China then openness will be compromised and if openness and stability are required then the system must be made torpid. Lockdown everywhere, to curb the transmission of Covid-19, has been rightly termed by the author as Great Paralysis direly needed to induce stability in an open and fast system.

Normalcy arrived after every pandemic and will this time also but by transforming the mode of life: adaptation to digital technology. A minicomputer in the hands plays an ineluctable role in education, commerce, health, entertainment etc. besides providing an easy pathway for racking up multiple day-to-day office works from home. The conversion to digital life is an irreversible process and with the practical onset of Artificial Intelligence technology, an unparalleled transformation will take place especially in medical technology: a major shift from treatment to prevention of diseases is

expected. The author concluded that switchover to digital technology will escalate productivity and improve the quality of life while shrink the employment opportunities. One of his predictions entailed reduction in retail outlets owing to expanding e-commerce.

Some eminent columnists have termed Covid-19 crisis as the last nail in the coffin of globalization as it gravely threatened the global supply chain not least the medical supplies. Various countries have hinted the attainment of self-sufficiency for securing themselves. The author categorically turned down the anti-globalization arguments based on two major facts: First, no trade barriers had been erected despite temporary travel bans; second, the vastly growing use of digital platforms like Facebook, Amazon, etc. indicate the intensifying global connectivity among the states. Absolute reversal of current-day globalization is well-nigh impossible and will have grievous consequences on the system

The second part covers governance: where USA and the UK, ranked by John Hopkins University as top two countries possessing substantial potential for handling an epidemic or pandemic, severely grappled in curbing the Covid-19 expansion. They also recorded the highest circadian death rate during the peak days. Whereas small Southeast Asian states like Taiwan, Singapore South Korea and Hong Kong redoubtably handled the situation. Some European countries like Germany, Denmark and Finland also coped remarkably. The author's study of this pandemic's tackling by different states emphasized the need for a qualitative rather than a quantitative government: the former refers to a competent, well-functioning and trusted state and latter refers to size and global role of government especially in economy.

The pandemic revealed some scathing realities: epistemic or knowledge-related crisis and partisanship. Epistemic crisis paved the way for denegation of experts' suggestions to curb the transmission. The presidents of the USA, Brazil, Mexico and the UK's prime minister were heedless to the opinion of public health experts. Meanwhile absurdly partisan response from the Democrat and Republican supporters in the USA was observed as they superseded the experts' opinion to allegiance with their political party: the Democrats followed the experts' suggestions whereas the Republicans contradicted. The author underscored the need for paying heed to the experts' opinion in such dire situations.

In the third part of the book, the author forecasts relapse of a bipolar world accruing the Second Cold War. He has lumped Covid-19 with the waves of US declinism listed by Samuel Huntington. With its stellar handling of pandemic and outshining economic indicators, retaining world's largest foreign exchange reserves, China has cropped-out as a direct rival to the USA. Nonetheless, the author predicted prevalence of cooperation rather than conflict during the Second Cold War keeping in view their trade interdependence. The *per annum* US-Soviet trade of \$2 billion during the climax of the Cold War is now equivalent to the *per diem* USA-China trade marking an annual increase by 365 times.

The Covid-19 crisis has undermined the liberal international order effective since 1945. Heretofore the UN, under its international order, has formulated a collective strategy in different sectors. The Covid-19 crisis has scrapped the idea of that multilateral approach. From securing medical supplies to devising a vaccine strategy, states have adopted their individual path while discarding the unified approach. Self-reliance has been promoted in a self-centered manner. For zeroing out the pervasive menace of Covid-19, a joint strategy favourable to all states should be devised. The author adduced the hallmark cooperation between the USA and the USSR during the Cold War period that annihilated small pox. Eradication of Covid-19 requires similar endeavour between the USA and China.

The author in the fourth and last part of the book focuses on economy. While reading between the lines of an editorial published in Financial Times, sensed the demand for socialist structure—government control of productivity and resources. Free-market system under capitalism, private ownership and control of resources, blossomed during the zenith of the Cold War: when socialism was equated with communism and loathed owing to being practiced by the USSR. Government's overarching role will now be a pre-requisite as free markets cannot resolve the issues of burgeoning inequity and widening job insecurity that will be precipitated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The most gruesome outcome of Covid-19 will be debt-crisis causing lean times in poor countries. Evaporation of hundreds of billion dollars from emerging markets will subdue the poor states for accepting loans on higher interest rates in order to keep their economies afloat thereby ensuing hyperinflation and probably stagflation. Leading economies like that of the USA, China and Japan may sail through this situation by getting loans at lower interest rates. The galloping gap between the haves and have-nots in the aftermath of this pandemic seems to festinate the Mathew Effect—Rich gets further richer and poor becomes further poor.

The book is a well-researched work based on the author's extensive study and publications in field of international relations and observations from the editorials and articles of well-known newspapers. Many books and works from Plato's era till to-date have been referred also. The author's irrefutable observations are witnessed globally and his predictions in economic arena are also appealing. The book is recommended for avid book readers, politicians, civil servants and students of international relations.

***Reviewed by Tariq Asad, a civil servant in Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.***

**Title:**           **Soft Power Internationalism**  
**Author:**       **Burcu Baykurt & Victoria de Grazia**  
**Publisher:**    Columbia University Press, New York, 2021, 352.

The existing literature on soft power provides a great deal of insight but it is lacking “greater conceptual refinement, theoretical development, and empirical rigor. “Soft Power and Internationalization” has tried to comprehend empirical data and various concepts of “Soft Power” developed and implemented in different countries and analysed them through various conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

The most interesting thing in the book is the selection of case study countries and the way writer has made connection with the overall concept of soft power. For example, if we observe Brazilian soft power strategy as per the case study is internal facing and domestic politics and decisions reflected externally in their foreign policy and soft power image in the world. On contrary, since 1980s Chinese soft power strategy is more external facing and focused on how world see towards Chinese development and how soft power tools are countering the narrative of “Chinese threat theories”.

Presentation of case studies from countries like Turkey and Brazil give a fresh perspective on soft power and shows how a concept largely promulgated by the West and mostly debated among China and USA has successfully upended by emerging countries like Brazil and turkey for the sake of their own postcolonial narrative.

Joseph Nye's concept of "soft power" introduced almost two decades ago, created a debate among intellectuals and policymakers to look at another source of influence, without military and economic power. This book “Soft power and internationalism” actually is a compilation of case studies from the European Union, China, Brazil, Turkey, and the United States, analysing the descent of soft power in the Euro-Atlantic and its evolution in the hands of other states particularly China trying to counter U.S. hegemony by non-military means.

Contributors from the case study countries have shown through concepts like normative vs soft power, circulating liberalism, democratizing internet how global and regional powers understand soft power and applied its various tools to create new ways of diplomacy, trading relationships, buying collaborations and partners, and develop regional cooperation. Offering a critical history of soft power as an intellectual project as well as a diplomatic practice.

In the introductory chapter of the book it is suggested that the global internet is one of the defining features of soft power internationalism. As growing world powers have turned to cultural resources to exert influence in foreign affairs, the internet at the same time has become the “terrain” of huge public and private investment and essential source of communicating diplomatic messages for example imagine a power of a tweet (Prime Minister Moodi tweet on Imran Khan’s health) or video on social media sowing seed of

revolution as we have seen in Arab Spring. With the historical perspective writer has also highlighted internet's role in geopolitics, defining national policies (data rights and free speech policy) and by coining term 5G proliferation also highlighted the fear of an internet/technological arms race between US and China.

In Chapter two Dilek Barlas and Lerna Yanik have evaluated Turkey's understanding of soft particularly in case of its trading policies and changes in its laws. Turkey is amending its human rights policies and domestic laws to adjust to EU standards. Here it is interesting to explore the basis of these amendments whether it is to enhance economic benefits and market access or is it just because of attractiveness of EU economic and political system? As per Joseph Nye these amendments are prime example of European Union successful execution policy of soft power to influence positive change. But at the same writers also refer to Turkey's own "transformative power" by giving a historical context since 1980s. Since 2002, not only neo- ottomanism and "Turkish model of transformation" made a comeback but the term soft power itself became one of the most frequently referred terms by Turkish leadership and has wielded soft power as the condition for being or becoming a global power – a goal being pursued by Turkish leadership.

In the third chapter, Oliver Stuenkel and Fernando have presented the concept of soft power in relation to domestic political transitions and political decisions reflecting on the soft power image of Brazil and its foreign policy. In the last decade, Former Brazilian President Lula da Silva's efforts to make his diplomatic actions more visible has repositioned Brazil itself globally during the last decade. Brazil intensified its investments in South America which increased its assertiveness, and surfaced to create new regional cooperation institutions like the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the South American Defence Council (CDS). At the Global level, Brazil played a crucial role in the Doha Round negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and has been a leading country to lead discussions and respond to the issues of climate change and nuclear proliferation. But in the present era of President Bolsonaro, Brazil is no longer interested and ready to contribute to climate change initiatives and lead south economic cooperation initiatives. The change of regime has altogether negatively transformed the soft power image of Brazil as a lead South South cooperation country, climate change lead country and humanitarian support and donor country. This shows the crucial role of leadership in developing soft power image of the country and how much the domestic dynamics of the country and politics reflect the image of the country globally.

In Chapter four Martina Bassan, Zhongying Pang and Anastas Vangeli talks about the historical perspective of soft power in China and how China is exercising soft power tools in Africa with the partner countries under economic cooperation projects like BRI. The rise of China, its impact on world affairs, and its apparent impact on the world peace is a matter of great concern, not just among foreign intellectuals and policy makers but also in Chinese

intellectual circles and think tanks. Beijing has progressively applied the concept of soft power, in diplomatic language, such as in the “good neighbour diplomacy” (the 1980s and early 1990s), “great power diplomacy”(late 1990s), “energy diplomacy”, “soft power diplomacy”, “public diplomacy”(2000s) as well as “peaceful rise” and “peaceful development” and “harmonious world”. Confucius Institutes—nodes of Chinese culture and language—the number in the hundreds and are present on six continents are one of the prime examples of Chinese soft power at work. Chinese scholars like Bassan have highlighted other sources of soft power, including China's traditional culture, the network of 70 million overseas Chinese, Chinese development models to eradicate poverty makes it attractive to developing countries, China's positive role as mediator in the North Korean nuclear stand-off and most importantly its five principles of mutual respect and non-interference in domestic politics of other countries presents itself as peaceful rising power

***Reviewed by Talha Chishti, student of MPhil at IR Department, NDU.***

## Documents

### Document: 1

#### **Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World, Washington D.C, February 4, 2021.**

**T**HE PRESIDENT: Mr. Secretary, it's great to be here with you. And I've been looking forward a long time to be able to call you "Mr. Secretary." Good afternoon, everyone. It's an honor to be back at the State Department under the eyes of the first American chief diplomat, Benjamin Franklin.

And, by the way, I want you all to know in the press I was the Benjamin Franklin Professor of Presidential Politics at Penn. And I thought they did that because I was as old as he was, but I guess not.

Anyway, all kidding aside, it's great to be here and stand alongside our most recent and senior diplomat, Secretary Tony Blinken. Mr. Secretary, thank you for welcoming us today. We've worked together for over 20 years. Your diplomatic skills are respected equally by your friends and our competitors around the world.

And they know when you speak, you speak for me. And so is the message I want the world to hear today: America is back. America is back. Diplomacy is back at the center of our foreign policy.

As I said in my inaugural address, we will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again, not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's. American leadership must meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism, including the growing ambitions of China to rival the United States and the determination of Russia to damage and disrupt our democracy.

We must meet the new moment accelerating global challenges — from the pandemic to the climate crisis to nuclear proliferation — challenging the will only to be solved by nations working together and in common. We can't do it alone.

That must be this — we must start with diplomacy rooted in America's most cherished democratic values: defending freedom, championing opportunity, upholding universal rights, respecting the rule of law, and treating every person with dignity.

That's the grounding wire of our global policy — our global power. That's our inexhaustible source of strength. That's America's abiding advantage.

Though many of these values have come under intense pressure in recent years, even pushed to the brink in the last few weeks, the American people are going to emerge from this moment stronger, more determined, and better equipped to unite the world in fighting to defend democracy, because we have fought for it ourselves.

Over the past few days, we've been in close cooperation with our allies and partners to bring together the international community to address the military coup in Burma.

I've also been in touch with Leader McConnell to discuss our shared concerns about the situation in Burma, and we are united in our resolve.

There can be no doubt: In a democracy, force should never seek to overrule the will of the people or attempt to erase the outcome of a credible election.

The Burmese military should relinquish power they have seized, release the advocates and activists and officials they have detained, lift the restrictions on telecommunications, and refrain from violence.

As I said earlier this week, we will work with our partners to support restoration of democracy and the rule of law, and impose consequences on those responsible.

Over the past two weeks, I've spoken with the leaders of many of our closest friends — Canada, Mexico, the UK, Germany, France, NATO, Japan, South Korea, Australia — to begin reforming the habits of cooperation and rebuilding the muscle of democratic alliances that have atrophied over the past few years of neglect and, I would argue, abuse.

America's alliances are our greatest asset, and leading with diplomacy means standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies and key partners once again.

By leading with diplomacy, we must also mean engaging our adversaries and our competitors diplomatically, where it's in our interest, and advance the security of the American people.

That's why, yesterday, the United States and Russia agreed to extend the New START Treaty for five years to preserve the only remaining treaty between our countries safeguarding nuclear stability.

At the same time, I made it clear to President Putin, in a manner very different from my predecessor, that the days of the United States rolling over in the face of Russia's aggressive actions — interfering with our elections, cyberattacks, poisoning its citizens — are over. We will not hesitate to raise the cost on Russia and defend our vital interests and our people. And we will be more effective in dealing with Russia when we work in coalition and coordination with other like-minded partners.

The politically motivated jailing of Alexei Navalny and the Russian efforts to suppress freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are a matter of deep concern to us and the international community.

Mr. Navalny, like all Russian citizens, is entitled to his rights under the Russian constitution. He's been targeted — targeted for exposing corruption. He should be released immediately and without condition.

And we'll also take on directly the challenges posed by our prosperity, security, and democratic values by our most serious competitor, China.

We'll confront China's economic abuses; counter its aggressive, coercive action; to push back on China's attack on human rights, intellectual property, and global governance.

But we are ready to work with Beijing when it's in America's interest to do so. We will compete from a position of strength by building back better at home, working with our allies and partners, renewing our role in international institutions, and reclaiming our credibility and moral authority, much of which has been lost.

That's why we've moved quickly to begin restoring American engagement internationally and earn back our leadership position, to catalyze global action on shared challenges.

On day one, I signed the paperwork to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement. We're taking steps led by the example of integrating climate objectives across all of our diplomacy and raise the ambition of our climate targets. That way, we can challenge other nations, other major emitters, to up the ante on their own commitments. I'll be hosting climate leaders — a climate leaders' summit to address the climate crisis on Earth Day of this year.

America must lead in the face of this existential threat. And just as with the pandemic, it requires global cooperation.

We've also reengaged with the World Health Organization. That way, we can build better global preparedness to counter COVID-19, as well as detect and prevent future pandemics, because there will be more.

We've elevated the status of cyber issues within our government, including appointing the first national — Deputy National Security Advisor for Cyber and Emerging Technology. We're launching an urgent initiative to improve our capability, readiness, and resilience in cyberspace.

Today, I'm announcing additional steps to course-correct our foreign policy and better unite our democratic values with our diplomatic leadership.

To begin, Defense Secretary Austin will be leading a Global Posture Review of our forces so that our military footprint is appropriately aligned with our foreign policy and national security priorities. It will be coordinated across all elements of our national security, with Secretary Austin and Secretary Blinken working in close cooperation.

And while this review is taking place, we'll be stopping any planned troop withdrawals from Germany. We're also stepping up our diplomacy to end the war in Yemen — a war which has created a humanitarian and strategic catastrophe. I've asked my Middle East team to ensure our support for the United Nations-led initiative to impose a ceasefire, open humanitarian channels, and restore long-dormant peace talks.

This morning, Secretary Blinken appointed Tim Lenderking, a career foreign policy officer, as our special envoy to the Yemen conflict. And I appreciate his doing this. Tim is a life — has lifelong experience in the region, and he'll work with the U.N. envoy and all parties of the conflict to push for a diplomatic resolution.

And Tim's diplomacy will be bolstered by USAID, working to ensure that humanitarian aid is reaching the Yemeni people who are suffering an unendurable devastation. This war has to end.

And to underscore our commitment, we are ending all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen, including relevant arms sales.

At the same time, Saudi Arabia faces missile attacks, UAV strikes, and other threats from Iranian-supplied forces in multiple countries. We're going to continue to support and help Saudi Arabia defend its sovereignty and its territorial integrity and its people.

We also face a crisis of more than 80 million displaced people suffering all around the world. The United States' moral leadership on refugee issues was a point of bipartisan consensus for so many decades when I first got here. We shined the light of lamp of liberty on oppressed people. We offered safe havens for those fleeing violence or persecution. And our example pushed other nations to open wide their doors as well.

So today, I'm approving an executive order to begin the hard work of restoring our refugee admissions program to help meet the unprecedented global need. It's going to take time to rebuild what has been so badly damaged, but that's precisely what we're going to do.

This executive order will position us to be able to raise the refugee admissions back up to 125,000 persons for the first full fiscal year of the Biden-Harris administration. And I'm directing the State Department to consult with Congress about making a down payment on that commitment as soon as possible.

And to further repair our moral leadership, I'm also issuing a presidential memo to agencies to reinvigorate our leadership on the LGBTQI issues and do it internationally. You know, we'll ensure diplomacy and foreign assistance are working to promote the rights of those individuals, included by combatting criminalization and protecting LGBTQ refugees and asylum-seekers.

And finally, to successfully reassert our diplomacy and keep Americans safe, prosperous, and free, we must restore the health and morale of our foreign policy institutions.

I want the people who work in this building and our embassies and consulates around the world to know: I value your expertise and I respect you, and I will have your back. This administration is going to empower you to do your jobs, not target or politicize you. We want a rigorous debate that brings all perspectives and makes room for dissent. That's how we'll get the best possible policy outcomes.

So, with your help, the United States will again lead not just by the example of our power but the power of our example.

That's why my administration has already taken the important step to live our domestic values at home — our democratic values at home.

Within hours of taking office, I signed an executive order overturning the hateful, discriminatory Muslim ban; reversed the ban on transgender individuals serving in our military.

And as part of our commitment to truth, transparency, and accountability, we stated on day one — we started on day one with daily briefings of the press from the White House. We've reinstated regular briefings here at State and at the Pentagon. We believe a free press isn't an adversary; rather, it's essential. A free press is essential to the health of a democracy.

We've restored our commitment to science and to create policies grounded in facts and evidence. I suspect Ben Franklin would approve.

We've taken steps to acknowledge and address systemic racism and the scourge of white supremacy in our own country. Racial equity will not just be an issue for one department in our administration, it has to be the business of the whole of government in all our federal policies and institutions.

All this matters to foreign policy, because when we host the Summit of Democracy early in my administration to rally the nations of the world to defend democracy globally, to push back the authoritarianism's advance, we'll be a much more credible partner because of these efforts to shore up our own foundations.

There's no longer a bright line between foreign and domestic policy. Every action we take in our conduct abroad, we must take with American working families in mind. Advancing a foreign policy for the middle class demands urgent focus on our domestic economic renewal.

And that's why I immediately put forth the American Rescue Plan to pull us out of this economic crisis. That's why I signed an executive order strengthening our Buy American policies last week. And it's also why I'll work with Congress to make far-reaching investments in research and development in transformable technologies.

These investments are going to create jobs, maintain America's competitive edge globally, and ensure all Americans share in the dividends.

If we invest in ourselves and our people, if we fight to ensure that American businesses are positioned to compete and win on the global stage, if the rules of international trade aren't stacked against us, if our workers and intellectual property are protected, then there's no country on Earth — not China or any other country on Earth — that can match us.

Investing in our diplomacy isn't something we do just because it's the right thing to do for the world. We do it in order to live in peace, security, and prosperity. We do it because it's in our own naked self-interest. When we strengthen our alliances, we amplify our power as well as our ability to disrupt threats before they can reach our shores.

When we invest in economic development of countries, we create new markets for our products and reduce the likelihood of instability, violence, and mass migrations.

When we strengthen health systems in far regions of the world, we reduce the risk of future pandemics that can threaten our people and our economy.

When we defend equal rights of people the world over — of women and girls, LGBTQ individuals, indigenous communities, and people with disabilities, the people of every ethnic background and religion — we also ensure that those rights are protected for our own children here in America.

America cannot afford to be absent any longer on the world stage. I come today to the State Department, an agency as old and as storied as the nation itself, because diplomacy has always been essential to how America writes its own destiny.

For the diplomacy of Ben Franklin helped assure the success of our revolution. The vision of the Marshall Plan helped prevent the world from foundering on the wreckage of war. And the passions of Eleanor Roosevelt declared the audacious idea of universal rights that belong to all.

The leadership of diplomats of every stripe, doing the daily work of engagement, created the very idea of a free and interconnected world. We are a country that does big things. American diplomacy makes it happen. And our administration is ready to take up the mantle and lead once again.

Thank you all. And may God bless you and protect our troops, our diplomats, and our development experts, and all Americans serving in harm's way.

Going this way. Thank you all.

*Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world/>*

**Document: 2****Remarks by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Launch Ceremony in Celebration of the 70th Anniversary of China-Pakistan Diplomatic Relations, March 2, 2021.**

Your Excellency Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,  
Good evening. Asalam Alekum!

**I**t gives me great pleasure to attend today's launch ceremony to celebrate the 70th anniversary of China-Pakistan diplomatic relations. On behalf of the Chinese government, I wish to extend warm congratulations on this joyful occasion, and express our heartfelt appreciation to friends from all walks of life for their long-standing commitment to the warm relations between our two countries.

As Premier Zhou Enlai once said, friendly interactions between the Chinese and Pakistani peoples date back to the dawn of history. As early as over 2,000 years ago, our two peoples were already closely connected by the ancient Silk Road. The friendly exchanges spanning millenniums have nurtured the growth of the bilateral relationship in contemporary times. On 21 May 1951, the nascent People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in a move to abandon ideological differences and bring down the iron curtain of the Cold War, officially established diplomatic relations, thus opening a new chapter in China-Pakistan friendship.

The past seven decades have been 70 years of empathy, mutual trust and support between China and Pakistan. We have been standing side by side with each other - be it at the crucial time when New China sought to break new ground in its foreign relations against foreign blockade, or at the vital moment when Pakistan's national security and dignity were at stake.

Thanks to the commitment of generations of our leaders and our peoples, China-Pakistan friendship has grown into a towering tree with deep roots in the heart of the two peoples. It is indeed the most valuable strategic asset for both countries. President Xi Jinping paid a historical state visit to Pakistan in 2015, and leaders of the two countries elevated the bilateral relationship to an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, setting the long-term goal of building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

The past seven decades have been 70 years of genuine amity and sincere mutual assistance in face of various challenges. We have always extended each other a helping hand timely to overcome difficulties-be it during the devastating Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, the heavy floods in Pakistan in 2010, or the COVID-19 pandemic since last year. At the end of last January, the first shipment of 500,000 doses of Chinese vaccines arrived in Pakistan. Hence

Pakistan became the first country to receive Chinese vaccines. This fully attests to the special, iron-strong friendship that we have.

The past seven decades have been 70 years of solidarity and collaboration for common development. Pakistan is the first country in the subcontinent to recognize China as a market economy and to sign a free trade agreement with us. From Karakoram Highway to Gwadar Port, from the Heavy Mechanical Complex in Taxila to the K2/K3 Nuclear Power Projects, from the China-Pakistan Fraternity Emergency Center in Gwadar to the Lahore Orange Line Project, these iconic epitomes speak volumes for our practical cooperation.

In recent years in particular, with unremitting efforts by both countries, a "one plus four" structure of cooperation has been up and running-with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as the center supported by four pillars of Gwadar Port, infrastructure, energy and industry. Fruitful results are being achieved. Of the 70 agreed early harvest CPEC projects, 46 have been launched or completed. These projects, with a total investment of U.S.\$25.4 billion, will help Pakistan create more jobs and build a strong momentum for its economic and social development.

Friends,

The world today is undergoing profound changes and struggling against the pandemic, both of which are unseen for a century. The global economy has been plunged into deep recession. And all countries are taking a "tough test". Under the new circumstances, consolidating and expanding our all-weather strategic cooperative partnership serves not only the shared interests of our two countries, but also the stability and well-being of the region and the whole world. We should take this 70th anniversary as an opportunity to initiate higher-quality, more extensive, and deeper cooperation, and step up our efforts of building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

To this end, the two sides should deepen political mutual trust. We should continue to firmly support each other on issues of respective core interests and major concerns, enhance communication and coordination on issues of strategic importance, and stand shoulder to shoulder in response to international and regional changes as well as various risks and challenges.

The two sides should remain committed to mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. We should steadily push forward the CPEC, and forge new cooperation highlights in industry, agriculture, science and technology, people's livelihoods, and cooperation involving third parties. This is aimed at improving Pakistan's capability for sustainable development and making China-Pakistan cooperation deliver greater benefits to the two peoples.

The two sides should pass our friendship onto future generations. We should ensure that our various celebrations for the 70th anniversary are successful so as to encourage the two peoples, especially the younger generation, to participate more actively in the friendly exchanges between the two countries. This is aimed at increasing mutual understanding and affinity

between our two peoples and strengthening the new forces to carry forward China-Pakistan friendship.

The two sides should practice multilateralism. We should stand steadfastly for openness and inclusiveness, and oppose seclusion and exclusion. We should uphold that all countries are equal, regardless of their size. We should oppose hegemonism and power politics. We both should support consultation and cooperation, and oppose conflict and confrontation. We should make new contributions to the settlement of regional hot spot issues, to international cooperation against terrorism, and to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

To conclude, may the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between China and Pakistan reach greater heights. May China-Pakistan friendship be ever-lasting!

Thank you.

*Source: [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1858000.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1858000.shtml)*

**Document: 3****Final Communiqué of the Extraordinary Open-Ended Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the Level of Permanent Representatives on the Situation in Afghanistan, August 22, 2021.**

1. At the invitation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the 14th Islamic Summit, and the OIC Executive Committee, an extraordinary open-ended meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the level of Permanent Representatives on the situation in Afghanistan was held on Sunday, Muharram 14, 1443 AH -August 22, 2021 CE, at the headquarters of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) General Secretariat in Jeddah.
2. The meeting expressed solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and reiterated the commitment of the OIC's Member States to help them bring peace, security, stability, and development to Afghanistan.
3. The meeting reiterated the OIC's commitment towards Afghanistan as expressed in its resolutions adopted by the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), other meetings, and the Makkah Declaration issued on July 11, 2018 by the International Ulama Conference on Peace and Stability in Afghanistan.
4. The meeting highlighted the international community's expectations from the future leadership in Afghanistan regarding promoting national reconciliation, observance of the international conventions and agreements, and adherence to the international governing norms enshrined in the UN Charter and resolutions.
5. The meeting underscored the necessity to protect and respect the right to life, security, and dignity of the people of Afghanistan in compliance with the tolerant Islamic principles and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
6. The meeting expressed serious concern about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan because of the increased flow of IDPs and refugees due to the current situation in the country, the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic and drought; and in this respect, called on the Member States, the Islamic financial institutions, and partners to act swiftly to provide humanitarian assistance in the areas that need it the most and urgently.
7. The meeting called on the Secretary-General to engage with donor financial institutions to provide necessary assistance to alleviate the suffering of the IDPs in Afghanistan and the Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries and underscored the importance of the OIC's Mission in Kabul to play a crucial role in coordinating the provision of humanitarian assistance.
8. The meeting underscored cooperation in facilitating safe evacuation operations and underscored that civilians wishing to leave Afghanistan must be allowed to do that.
9. The meeting underscored the necessity for inclusive dialogue among all Afghan parties, representative of the people of Afghanistan for the future of their country.

10. The meeting also urged all parties to work towards advancing the interests of the Afghan people, to renounce violence and urgently restore security and civil order throughout the Afghan society, and to establish lasting peace to achieve the aspirations of the Afghan people for stability, decent life, respect of their rights, and prosperity.

11. The meeting reaffirmed the OIC's full commitment to support the Afghan-led and owned peace process and comprehensive reconciliation to reach a comprehensive and lasting political solution and ensure the support of this process by the main neighbouring countries and the international community. It affirmed that the OIC stands with Afghanistan at this critical juncture.

12. The meeting called upon the future Afghan leadership and the international community to ensure that Afghanistan is never again used as a platform or haven for terrorists and not allow terrorist organizations to have a foothold there.

13. The meeting recalled the severe suffering and hardship Afghanistan and its people went through due to protracted conflict and violence and asserted that all efforts need to be directed towards the development and the welfare of the people.

14. The meeting underscored the need for support by the international community to ensure that Afghanistan is assisted in its socio-economic development trajectory without interference in its internal affairs.

15. The meeting underscored the necessity to resolve intra-Afghan differences through peaceful means.

16. The meeting called for dispatching a high-level delegation from the OIC's General Secretariat to visit the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to convey the OIC's message towards supporting peace, stability, and national reconciliation in Afghanistan.

17. The meeting requested the Secretary-General to follow up on the situation in Afghanistan and take all measures necessary to monitor and evaluate the developments, in coordination with members of the Executive Committee, and present a report thereon to the CFM at its next session.

*Source: [https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t\\_id=29375&t\\_ref=18482&lan=en](https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=29375&t_ref=18482&lan=en)*

**Document: 4**  
**Joint Statement Director Generals of Military Operations of India and Pakistan, February 25, 2021.**

The Director Generals of Military Operations of India and Pakistan held discussions over the established mechanism of hotline contact. The two sides reviewed the situation along the Line of Control and all other sectors in a free, frank and cordial atmosphere.

In the interest of achieving mutually beneficial and sustainable peace along the borders, the two DGsMO agreed to address each other's core issues and concerns which have propensity to disturb peace and lead to violence. Both sides agreed for strict observance of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the Line of Control and all other sectors with effect from midnight 24/25 Feb 2021.

Both sides reiterated that existing mechanisms of hotline contact and border flag meetings will be utilised to resolve any unforeseen situation or misunderstanding.

Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1700682>

## Guidelines for Contributors

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1. Papers/articles should not be longer than 7000 words or less than 5500 words, with an abstract of about 120-150 words. Provide Author details (designation, institutional affiliation, email) as the first footnote. Article pages should be numbered and no title page, borders are required.
2. Reviews of recent books by scholars of standing in their field may comprise 1000-1200 words.
3. Once the submission has been peer reviewed, the author cannot withdraw the article.
4. Single Authored contributions will be given preference (collaborative submissions should not exceed 2 authors).
5. Similarity Index must not exceed 18 % overall and 3% from a single source.
6. Standard structure of a research article must be followed with Article Title relevant to the Journal theme, Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Methodology, Main body/Analysis, and Conclusion.
7. Keywords should not be more than five.
8. Footnotes should be according to Chicago manual 16<sup>th</sup> edition. Follow the link : [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)
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### Writing Style:

1. British spellings should be used.
2. Date should be written as December 7, 2021.
3. Abbreviations should be written in brackets after writing within bracket after spelling the acronym in full at first use, e.g., the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Subsequently only SAARC should be used without bracket.
4. Word "per cent" should be used instead of sign "%".
5. Submissions not based on **Guidelines for Contributors** will not be accepted.

